

VANITY FAIR



OCTOBER 2023

**ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE**
SAVIOR OR
OVERLORD?

THE BAWDY
**QUEEN OF
PODCASTS**

BEHIND
THE TITAN'S
**FATAL
DESCENT**

PLUS

THE
WOULD-BE
**GATSBY
OF THE
HAMPTONS**

It's Good
To Be

BAD BUNNY

By MICHELLE RUIZ
Photographs by
SZILVESZTER MAKÓ





DIOR



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PRECISION AT EVERY LEVEL

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Co-Axial Master Chronometer

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Ω
OMEGA

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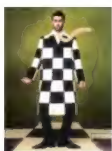
Long Day's Journey

Why are movies so endless when they're going to have five sequels anyway? A deep dive into a tiring trend.

By **Natalie Jarvey**

Illustration by **Jorge Arévalo**

On the Cover



Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio's clothing by **Valentino**; shoes by **Bottega Veneta**; socks by **Pantherella**; earrings by **Maria Tash** (left ear) and **XIV Karats**. Hair products by **Oribe**. Grooming products by **Tatcha**. Grooming by Ybelka Hurtado. Manicure by QueenFlorii. Tailor, Rebecca Suarez. Set design by Gerard Santos. Produced on location by Worldjunkies. Styled by Nicole Chapoteau. Menswear editor, Miles Pope. Photographed exclusively for VF by Szilveszter Makó in Puerto Rico. For details, go to [VF.com/credits](https://www.vanityfair.com/credits).

BENITO ANTONIO MARTÍNEZ OCASIO'S SHIRT BY LOEWE; PANTS BY VERSACE; EARRINGS BY MARIA TASH (LEFT EAR) AND XIV KARATS. FOR DETAILS, GO TO [VF.COM/CREDITS](https://www.vf.com/credits).



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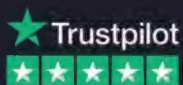
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The depth reached by Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh in 1960 on the first dive to the Challenger Deep, the ocean's deepest canyon. [P. 50]

"Everything seems to be bigger and bolder, including the country homes. This is Yorkshire, the Texas of England."

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JOHN MORRISON/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



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A wide receiver that catches passes from Patrick Mahomes. —MELISSA ETHERIDGE [P. 104]



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Susan Casey, who uncovers new details about the final, fatal journey of the *Titan* submersible in this issue, has been participating in and reporting on deep-sea expeditions for years,

so when she describes *Titan*'s last descent as a "tragedy-in-waiting," she does so with earned expertise. The ocean, as Casey writes, is an inexorable force against which glib tech mantras like "move fast and break things" have no traction—the thing you break is most likely to be your own. Exploration obviously carries risk, and even the best efforts at managing it cannot prevent disaster. Think of the space shuttle *Challenger* explosion, witnessed in devastating real time by the youth of my generation. But the story of the *Titan*—and the story of the *Titanic*, for that matter—are a reminder that the race to innovate is often powered by hubris. The great shroud of the sea rolls on, and all we're left with is sorrow for the loss.

PELL-MELL INNOVATION is also the topic of Nick Bilton's feature on artificial intelligence, although the relevant parties might disagree on the form of hubris involved. Are we hopeless narcissists to pursue the invention in the first place? Or is it vainglorious on the part of *Homo sapiens*, as Larry Page seems to have it, to assume we'll always have a monopoly on planetary dominance? Maybe we're destined to step aside for a machine species that plays Adam to our fusty Old Testament God. And wouldn't it be poetic justice for AI to solve a problem like, say, climate change by eradicating its primary cause, i.e., people? The AI train has left the



station, as Nick reports, and as it makes its presence known everywhere from journalism to film to medicine, it puts us stubborn humans in the position of embracing new capabilities while asserting values like creativity and originality; we are making the case for ourselves to ourselves. For defenders of the humanities, this is a familiar refrain—could AI have written *Moby-Dick*? Would it have bothered to?—but the stakes have never been higher. Tapping the brakes on technological advances has a historically poor track record, but it would be nice to maintain control of the wheel. Some say the world will end in fire, some say gray goo—read Nick's piece and you'll see how appetizing that looks. I understand the tidy paradox of being outsmarted by our own exceedingly clever invention—after all, that twist has been the stuff of literature for centuries, and my generation saw the movie *2001* when it was still a vision of the future. But I'm enough of a humanist to hope that our funny, irrational existence can keep the machines guessing.

RADHIKA JONES, Editor in Chief



High TIME

Embrace heady thrills with the best new people, pieces and places to check out, try on and pop open this month

■ *Finer Things*

THE SUITE LIFE: Inspired by the Art Deco splendour of The Savoy Hotel, Boodles' new suite (1) comprises a necklace, bracelet, ring and earrings with radiant-cut diamonds. boodles.com

LA VIE EN ROUGE: Van Cleef & Arpels' Perlée watch (4) features rose gold, guilloché white mother-of-pearl and a Swiss quartz movement. vancleefarpels.com

■ *On Beauty*

ON THE SCENT: When legends collide, beautiful things follow. A case in point is L'Or de J'adore (2), a reimagination of Dior's signature by Francis Kurkdjian. dior.com

NEW FLAME: Any Diptyque candle is a joy forever, but the launch of the new Les Mondes de Diptyque (8) takes things a step further with a refillable glass jar. diptyqueparis.com

CALL OF THE WILD: This rich cleansing balm from Wildsmith (7) contains gentle, natural surfactants to effortlessly melt away impurities while protecting

the skin's delicate barrier. wildsmithskin.com

GET THE GLOSS: The Phantom Volumizing Glossy Balm by Hourglass (5) is a bestseller for good reason, and Sense 110 is a wonderfully wearable new shade. hourglasscosmetics.co.uk

■ *Style File*

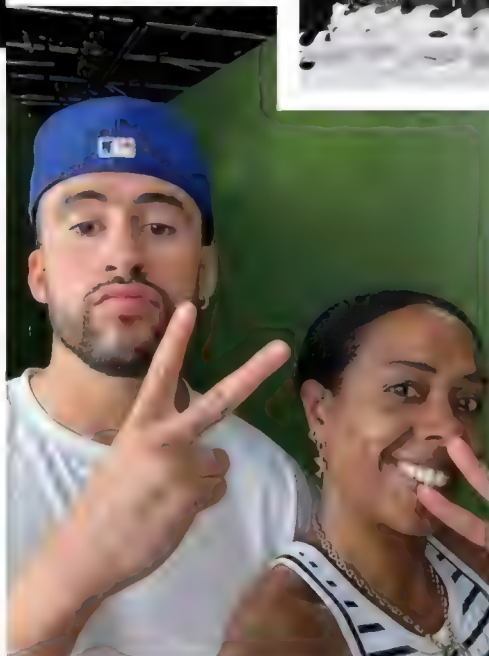
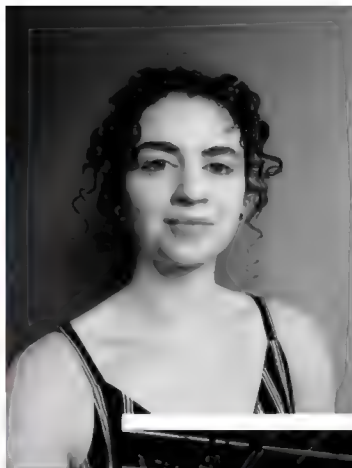
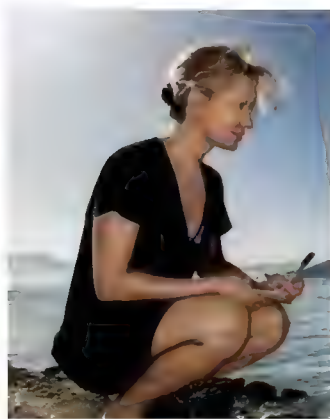
IN THE BAG: Balenciaga's chic Monaco Bag (6) is a large-scale purse that folds over to create a pouch when worn under the arm, or as a crossbody via a thick chain strap. balenciaga.com

BUBBLE UP: With a blend of three exceptional years that are complementary in character, Grand Siècle epitomises Laurent-Perrier's (9) pioneering approach to winemaking. laurent-perrier.com

■ *Culture Trip*

NEXT GENERATION: *Rebel: 30 Years of London Fashion* (3) sponsored by Alexander McQueen will celebrate young designers at The Design Museum in collaboration with the BFC. designmuseum.org

Contributors



Clockwise from top left: Susan Casey, Grace Aldrich, Szilveszter Makó, Carl Hiaasen, Bad Bunny and Nicole Chapoteau, Phil Klay.



Susan CASEY

"THE LAST DESCENT," P. 50

"The *Titan* tragedy brought up a lot of emotions because I'd been watching OceanGate's operation, fearing the worst, since 2018," says the best-selling writer, whose book, *The Underworld: Journeys to the Depths of the Ocean* (Doubleday), takes a deep dive into the world of undersea exploration.

Phil KLAY

"WAR OF THE WORLDS," P. 80

Klay, who explores the US military's foray into preparing for an evolution of war, is an award-winning author, Marine Corps veteran, and professor at Fairfield University. His novel *Missionaries* was named one of President Barack Obama's favorite books of the year in 2020.

Grace ALDRICH

"FUTURE TENSE," P. 64

The Kansas City-based fine artist and illustrator's work often wrestles with themes of the surreal, seeking to uncover the intrinsic darkness that can be found everywhere. "Whether good or bad, AI can and already has uprooted our lives in many ways," she says.

Nicole CHAPOTEAU

"BAD BUNNY'S YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION," P. 35

"It was such a treat to shoot Benito in Puerto Rico," says *VF* fashion director Chapoteau, who styled the artist for our cover. "I was able to pull items from a local shop, and the food was delicious—never have I ever had rice and beans on set," she says.

Szilveszter MAKÓ

"BAD BUNNY'S YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION," P. 35

"I force myself to contradiction in order to avoid confirming my own taste; everybody practices art in his own way," says the Hungarian photographer, who shot Bad Bunny in his native Puerto Rico, using local culture as a rich source of inspiration.

Carl HIAASEN

"SWAMP THINGS," P. 32

Hiaasen is a best-selling novelist, former longtime columnist at the *Miami Herald*, and author of the new book *Wrecker* (Knopf). The Florida native offers an inside look at the DeSantis-led state: "I'm making a bingo card of all the places in Florida my book gets banned."

ALDRICH: COURTESY OF GRACE ALDRICH; CASEY: BENNIE MAJFREDI; CHAPOTEAU: COURTESY OF NICOLE CHAPOTEAU; HIAASEN: ELENA SEIBERT; KLAY: HANNAH DUNPHY; MAKÓ: COURTESY OF SZILVESZTER MAKÓ.

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VANITAS VANITATUM

PAGE 10

Call her mogul!
ALEX COOPER
mics up, up, and away

11. **Answer: A**

EVERYBODY'S GAGA FOR GOTH

PAGE 25

**DANIEL BOULUD
LOVES NYC**

PALESTINE

TRAVELING LIGHT
WITH J. J. MARTIN

Design: **Fantasma**
 Styling: **Rebecca Ramo**
 Hair: **Enzo Angileri**
 Makeup: **Calvin Knie**
 Location: **Le Vernis**
 by **Rebecca Ramo**

Clothing and shoes by Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello.



Living Study

A storied Washington, DC, museum finds fresh purpose.

IN 1987 the National Museum of Women in the Arts opened with a simple but righteous mission: to reinsert women into the history of art. Thirty-six years later, the objective has grown to encompass activism in the living world. “We’re both a museum and a megaphone,” director Susan Fisher Sterling says. “If women are left out of the arts, what does that say about us in the larger social landscape?” Two blocks from the White House, the 93,400-square-foot landmark building—once a Masonic temple—is showcasing its ambitions after a two-year, \$67.5 million reimaging of the space by architectural firm Sandra Vicchio & Associates. The inaugural exhibition, “The Sky’s the Limit,” opens October 21 and features sculptures, large-scale works, and immersive installations by 13 contemporary artists—an opportunity, says chief curator Kathryn Wat, for every visitor to “have their thinking about creative women expanded exponentially.”

—ABIGAIL TRACY

FATHER Figure

ALEX COOPER takes the *Call Her Daddy* podcast to new heights

The show that prompted Jane Fonda to call Alex Cooper “one of the best interviewers I’ve ever had” is returning for season three, and that’s not even the biggest news for its 29-year-old star. Moving *Call Her Daddy* away from Barstool Sports, where it began, resulted in a Spotify deal worth around \$60 million; she’s also turned her attention to launching Gen Z talent into the stratosphere via her own media company, Trending. Now, Cooper is here to talk, and to listen.

RAISED IN suburban Pennsylvania, Cooper was the middle child of a TV-producer father and a psychologist mother who helped her (and her friends) get through adolescence: “My house was where you came to process emotions that maybe weren’t as accepted.” **AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY**, she wore her signature “Daddy” sweatshirt to make guys “feel uncomfortable. They’d be frustrated, and I could tell it was because I shouldn’t

have this on my chest. They’re like, ‘We’re Daddy.’ And I’m like, ‘No, I’m Daddy.’”

AS THE DUST settles from her moves away from Barstool and her original cohort, Sofia Franklyn, Cooper is “proud that I fought for something that I had built. I can sleep well at night because I know I worked my ass off.”

GETTING THAT COMPLIMENT from Fonda was “the coolest moment of my career. I cried to my parents afterward.” Another guest highlight? Miley Cyrus. “I’m never starstruck, but I was a massive Hannah Montana fan as a kid.”

HER MOST SURPRISING guests were Post Malone (“He’s the sweetest soul. ‘Yes, ma’am’ and ‘Sorry, ma’am.’”) and Gwyneth Paltrow. “I think that her reputation is interesting, because her vibe is so lovely.”

FOR THE MOST PART, Cooper’s been an open book—until she met her fiancé, film and TV producer Matt Kaplan. Initially, she’d only call him Mr. Sexy Zoom Man on air. “I actually have to work on this in therapy to be like, you cannot exploit this relationship.” **HER DEAL** with Spotify ends next summer—but she knows her value. Company data reported in the press revealed just how much a *Call Her Daddy* appearance can boost a guest’s profile. “There’s math and stats,” she laughs. “Gotta write it down for the next deal!”

—BRITT HENNEMUTH



MAROLA: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND WHITE CUBE GALLERY; PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN WESTOBY; NATIONAL MUSEUM: THOMAS H. FIELD; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS

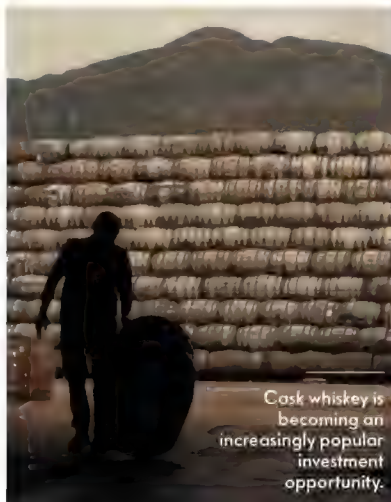


LIQUID *ASSETS*

With an innovative spirit, an expert team and unbeatable industry understanding, Whiskey & Wealth Club invites investors to swap stocks and shares for casks and barrels

WHETHER BUYING A single malt to savour on a special occasion or tucking a rare bottle into the cellar to age, a fine Irish whiskey or Scotch whisky has always been a good investment. However, it is now proving to be a lucrative option on a larger scale, with Whiskey & Wealth Club allowing investors to enter a market previously reserved for industry insiders.

The first to provide wholesale cask whiskey opportunities on this scale and at this level, Whiskey & Wealth Club makes the investment process as smooth as a great whiskey. Buyers purchase and hold a percentage of a distillery's New Make Spirit, the term used for the liquid before it has aged the necessary three years



Cask whiskey is becoming an increasingly popular investment opportunity.



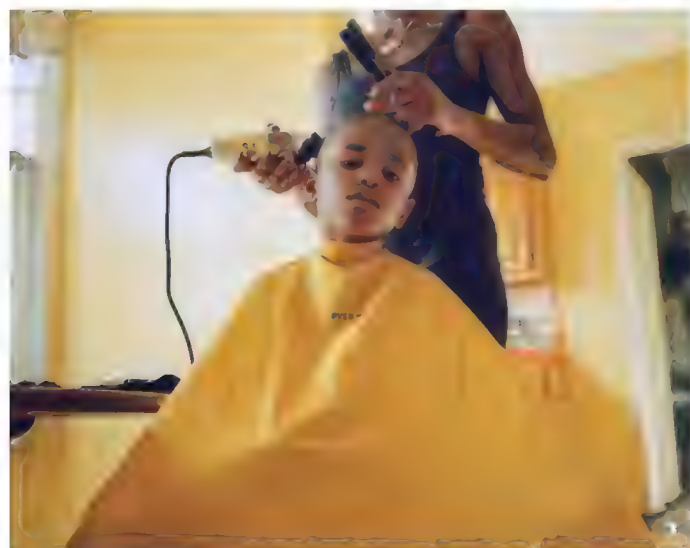
The expert team at Whiskey & Wealth Club guide investors through the process.

Whiskey is one of the fastest-growing alternative asset classes, drawing savvy investors.

before it can be called whiskey. Choosing a whiskey as an investment is much like choosing one to enjoy fireside during autumnal evenings; key considerations to take into account include age, brand and rarity. However, investors needn't be connoisseurs. Just as a traditional investment manager will have a preternatural knowledge of which stocks and shares are worth your attention, the Whiskey & Wealth Club team possess unparalleled expertise when it comes to the spirit. Their stringent standards mean they work only with the very best distilleries and are exceptionally well-placed to advise on how each whiskey's value may increase in future.

Whiskey is one of the fastest-growing alternative asset classes, and it's easy to see why so many savvy investors are drawn to it. In contrast to other contemporary investment opportunities such as cryptocurrency and NFTs, whiskey is a pleasingly tangible product and one that is already familiar to many. With Whiskey & Wealth Club, your investments are not tied to any financial markets and every detail from exit strategies to insurance and tax compliance is handled by the experienced team. Accessible for even a newcomer to the market, Whiskey & Wealth Club proves that the spirit is an alternative investment certainly worth toasting.

Find out more at whiskeywealthclub.com



Life STYLED

Three new books collect bounteous beauty, from pop art to the automotive

SIX PACK Novels and nonfiction scour the world outside and within



LOU REED: THE KING OF NEW YORK

Will Hermes portrays a complex portrait, encompassing Reed's politics and sexuality as well as his work from the Velvet Underground through his solo career. (FSG)



HOW TO SAY BABYLON

From poet Safiya Sinclair, a trenchant memoir of growing up in Jamaica under the ultrastrict eye of her Rastafarian father, and of finding her poetic voice. (Fourth Estate)



THE WOLVES OF ETERNITY

Karl Ove Knausgaard's newest finds adult half siblings, strangers to each other, considering immortality and death: one in the 1980s, the other present day. (Harvill Secker)



PEOPLE COLLIDE

A writer finds that he's switched bodies with his wife and that she—along with his body—has disappeared; happily, Isle McElroy's novel, while humorous, bends contemplative rather than absurd. (HarperVia)



LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

In a time plagued by extinctions and food shortages, a chef prepares immoderate meals for a billionaire and his (paying) guests in C Pam Zhang's sensuous, gutting novel. (Hutchinson Heinemann)



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ABED SALAMA

Nathan Thrall's immersive, troubling reporting follows a Palestinian father's search for his five-year-old son in the wake of a bus accident outside Jerusalem. (Allen Lane) —K.W.

Brevity & Soul

Short story collections worth lingering over this fall



ROMAN STORIES by Jhumpa Lahiri

Writing first in her adopted Italian, Lahiri conjures freighted connections—a husband longs for another woman; a family weathers racist attacks—in and around a Rome humming with life. (Picador)



THE HIVE AND THE HONEY by Paul Yoon

In seven virtuosic stories centering characters that include a 17th-century samurai and a contemporary New York immigrant, Yoon captures scenes of the Korean diaspora. (Scribner UK)



OUR STRANGERS by Lydia Davis

With signature wit and depth, Davis presents a compendium of flash and short fiction. Bypassing Amazon, the title is available solely at libraries and indie stores. (Canongate)



THIS IS SALVAGED by Vauhini Vara

A teen whose brother has died of cancer takes a job as a phone sex operator, an artist constructs a biblical ark, and more droll, astute snapshots of human relations. (Grove Press UK) —K.W.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KARLOTTA FREIER; CARTER, BOTY: COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS AND PUBLISHERS. BRONCO: COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY/PHAIDON PRESS. BOOK COVERS: COURTESY OF THE PUBLISHERS.

Photograph by
CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON

Split **SECOND**

The pure 1908-minted *Time Square's* first full-size model, with a record-breaking two-hour airplane flight, and winnowed Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expedition, as well as the introduction of Ford's Model T. It's also when founder Hans Wilsdorf trademarked *Ruler*. Now the watchmaker notes that second year as a marker for the debut style in its new collection. The *Perpetual 1908* pays aesthetic nods to the archive (early Oyster *Perpetuals*, as well as the President Obama-favored *Antique Cellini*) with crisp, modern numerals, an 18-karat T₁ dial, an exhibition back that reveals its hand-crafted movement, among its women's and men's designs, nothing more. —Jeffrey Skowronski

Paint the TOWN

“The coat is the picture,” John Singer Sargent once told a portrait sitter reluctant to don cashmere in the summer. At the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, *Fashioned by Sargent* explores the artist’s focus on garments—and his penchant for styling his subjects himself. Here, an ode to the power and passion of vivid red



GOING ROUGE

1. Aerin Rose de Grasse Rouge eau de parfum, £120. (esteelauder.co.uk)
2. Loewe dress, £925. (loewe.com/eur)
3. Tiffany & Co. earrings, price upon request. (tiffany.co.uk)
4. Polo Ralph Lauren bag, £699. (ralphlauren.co.uk)
5. Gabriela Hearst trench coat, £12,090. (gabrielahearst.com)
6. Chanel Le Vernis nail color in Incendiaire, £29. (chanel.com)
7. Tory Burch shoes, £445. (toryburch.com/en-gb)
8. Valentino Garavani bag, £2,550. (valentino.boutiques)
9. Shiseido TechnoSatin gel lipstick in Short Circuit, £30. (shiseido.co.uk)
10. Ileana Makri necklace, £15,442. (ileanamakri.com)
11. Interior bra, £302. (neimanmarcus.com/en-gb)
12. Gucci shirt, £400. (gucci.com/uk)
13. Omega watch, £5,040. (omegawatches.com/en-gb)

John Singer Sargent’s *Dr. Pozzi at Home* is among the works on view through January 15, 2024.

GUCCI, LOEWE, INTERIOR, JOSEPHINE SCHIELE, STYLING, CAROLINE COLSTON, SARGENT, COURTESY OF THE PUBLISHER AND THE HAMMER MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES, THE ARMAND HAMMER COLLECTION, ALL OTHERS, COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.



Marty Without THE MOB

Killers of the Flower Moon is part of a rich but often overlooked strain of Scorsese's storied career
By David Canfield

MARTIN SCORSESE ISN'T afraid of what he doesn't know. "He's the gutsiest director I've ever met in my life," says Irwin Winkler, who's produced Scorsese films for more than three decades. Scorsese may be best known for iconic crime stories inspired by his own Italian American upbringing in New York, but this is also the man who delivered Hollywood's best Edith Wharton adaptation, darted from *The Color of Money*'s modern setting to *The Last Temptation of Christ*, and helmed a Liza Minnelli musical being revived nearly 50 years later. His range is on display again in this fall's *Killers of the Flower Moon*, a haunting, real-life tragedy set in the Osage Nation of Oklahoma. "His fierce determination to do what he feels is the right thing for a movie is really unique," says Winkler. That's no more evident than when it comes to Scorsese's non-mob hits—a remarkable catalog unto itself.

1. *KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON* (2023)

The movie is adapted from David Grann's book about the century-old murders of Osage Native Americans, but Scorsese greatly expanded the Indigenous perspective. He worked with Rodrigo Prieto, cinematographer on his last four movies, filming at the sites of the violence and choosing rich, naturalistic colors. "Most Osage rituals have to do with the elements—sun, water," Prieto says. "It's always an interpretation. That's part of art. But we really tried for authenticity."

2. *SILENCE* (2016)

This drama, following 17th-century Jesuit priests in Japan, may be Scorsese's most underrated faith-driven film, as it confronts the unknowns of spirituality. The Taiwan set presented unwieldy conditions, with weather changing wildly by the hour. Scorsese called *Silence* a passion project more than 25 years in the making.

3. *THE WOLF OF WALL STREET* (2013)

Scorsese wrestled with whether this kinetic, drug-fueled Wall Street epic was the right movie for him to make at the time, but Winkler nudged him. "To do this the right way, you had to really go out and push yourself, and Marty's great at that," Winkler says. "I don't think another director could do it."

4. *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE* (1993)

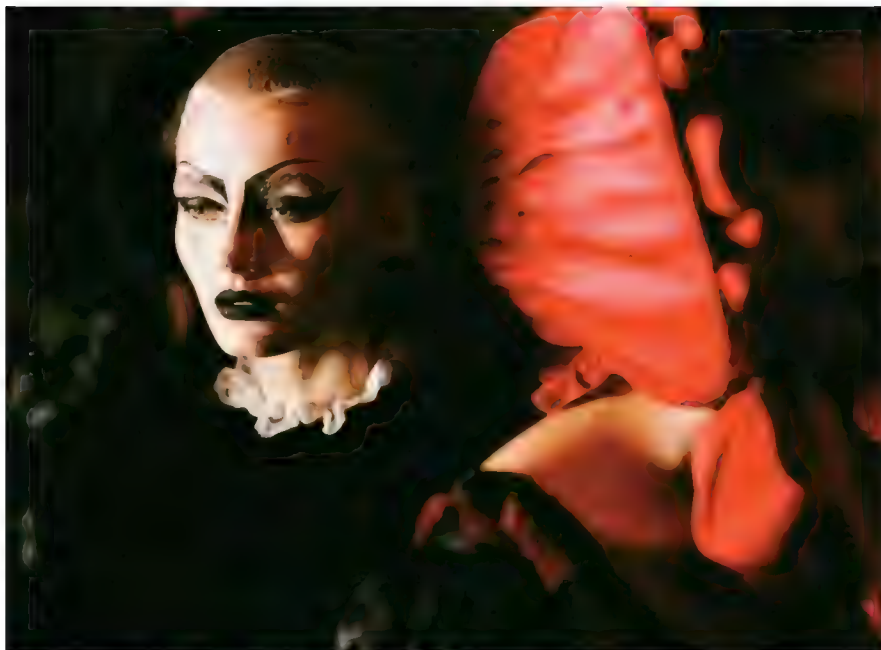
While Scorsese had made a number of New York classics by 1993, he entered uncharted territory with this Gilded Age romantic drama based on the novel. Its sumptuous brilliance can be credited to Scorsese's famous attention to detail. "Perfection of the period," as Oscar-nominated hairstylist Alan D'Angerio describes the design team's mantra. "It was all Marty. All we did was follow his lead."

5. *RAGING BULL* (1980)

Early in development, the brilliant boxing drama starring Robert De Niro seemed doomed. The executives hated it. Scorsese lacked interest. But after a drug overdose sent him to the hospital, the director felt newly, intensely connected to the visceral character study. "Bob visited him in the hospital," Winkler says. "They sat down and talked, and Marty found himself in the story."

6. *NEW YORK, NEW YORK* (1977)

Gearing up to make this starry big-band musical, Winkler wanted Gene Kelly to direct at first but decided that the hotshot behind *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver* would be a more unexpected choice. "I knew he would bring grittiness to the story," Winkler says. The movie bombed, but it became a Broadway musical this year and there are rumors of a miniseries adaptation. Like its director, it has stood the test of time.



DARK *Matter*

Nodding to gothic horror and cyber dystopia, moody makeup brings a glamorous edge to existential concerns

WHEN THE VAMPIRES are played by Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie—chiseled features, haute froideur—it's hard not to side with the bloodthirsty. *The Hunger*, Tony Scott's 1983 directorial debut, opens in a New York nightclub, as Bauhaus frontman Peter Murphy sings the propulsive "Bela Lugosi's Dead." The lovers select their prey: a sunglasses-at-night guy and a redhead with slashes of eyeliner and crimson lips. She dances, unaware that she exits the film in six minutes flat.

A speed-walking cast of models made a similarly fleeting appearance at Marc

Jacobs's fall 2023 show. The designer's ode to the '80s manifested as bleached wigs, cropped black stockings, a striped suit fit for *Beetlejuice*. But it was the drained faces and brusque red mouths, together with show notes credited to OpenAI and ChatGPT, that brought *The Hunger* to mind—as if updating the plot for an era of vampire electronics. "We wanted a futuristic vibe, so that's why we went for that gaunt look," says makeup artist Diane Kendal, who hollowed models' eye sockets with gray shadows. (Her inspiration was 1982's *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott, Tony's brother.) Kendal did dab highlighter on the cheekbones, nose, and tear ducts—"because you still want the girls to look beautiful, even though it's not the most beautiful makeup."

That impulse to veer into darkness is the order of the day, from *Wednesday* (slated for a poststrike return) to Olivia Rodrigo's music video for "Vampire."

The lyrics lambast an ex ("bloodsucker, fame fucker"), and Rodrigo has bite, her oxblood lipstick offset by ethereal, glossy lids. Makeup artist Kathy Jeung wanted the pop star "to look powerful and vulnerable at the same time," she explains. The "spidery, clumpy lashes" were Rodrigo's idea, like tears hardened into spiky resolve.

Bakeup Beauty's amped-up mascara, Tarantulash, creates exactly that effect. "I didn't want it to be like 'voluminous, feathery' bullshit," says cofounder and makeup artist Jo Baker, referring to the usual puffed-up marketing names. Hers is to the point. She teased it months ahead of launch, posting a photo of an orange-and-black tarantula alongside her two-tone Critics Choice makeup look for Natasha Lyonne. "This is not for the fainthearted," Baker says of the fast-build formula that lasts. "I could be caught in the rain. I can have a full emotional meltdown, which, let's be honest, can happen to any of us."

That was unexpectedly the case for at least one damp-eyed guest at Rodarte's fall 2023 show, where Tori Amos's "Winter" accompanied the fantastically gloomy procession. ("Hair is gray and the fires are burning," Amos soothes from 1992.) Witchy liner, pictured above, set the mood, seen first with a suite of neo-Morticia black dresses. "We kept pushing it with early punk references and gothic fairy notes," says James Kaliardos of the eyeliner shapes, which he sketched with a brow pencil for symmetry before inking with Nars's Climax. "Though it's hard to do, I know a lot of girls that want to rock this look." Even that severe beauty statement found fanciful counterpoints: in Rodarte's metallic fringe dresses and nearby tables set with glitter-covered feasts. The future, however uncertain, shines bright. —LAURA REGENSDORF



Nars Cosmetics
Climax liquid
eyeliner, £25.



Dior Beauty
Mono Couleur
Couture eye shadow
in Black Bow, £31.



Victoria Beckham
Beauty
Contour Stylus, £32.



Bakeup Beauty
Tarantulash
mascara, £22.



19/99 Beauty
High-Shine
Gloss, £18.



Pound Cake
Cake Batter lipstick
in Bloodberry, £19.

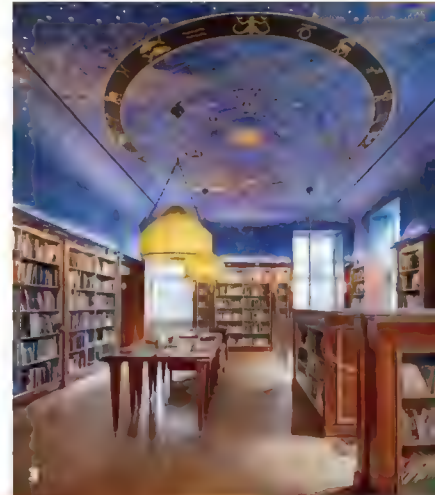
PRODUCTS: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.



1. Boulud hails a taxi—or takes his BMW. 2. To be seen, stop by his **Blue Box Café** at the Tiffany & Co. flagship, launched this spring. 3. For French children's books, **Albertine** is a favorite. "We can never get enough."



4. To enjoy live music, he's off to **Bemelmans Bar** in the Carlyle Hotel. 5. **Jōji Box** is "often lunch on my desk."



Chef's MENU

DANIEL BOULUD shares his go-to spots in NYC as his namesake restaurant turns 30

"THE VIBE OF the city was so high... there was hope of change, and New York was New York, there was opportunity," says Daniel Boulud of arriving in 1982, a 27-year-old chef eager to tantalize the American palate with French cuisine. "The time of Delmonico's and the Four Seasons," he says, "that was a real inspiration, understanding that it'd be great to be part of this history." Attuned to the possibilities, "I decided to live on the Upper East Side and make that my village." Now, with seven establishments dotting Manhattan—his first, Restaurant Daniel, celebrated 30 years this spring—Boulud takes VF for a spin through the city where, he hopes, he might "always continue to create." —KAYLA HOLLIDAY

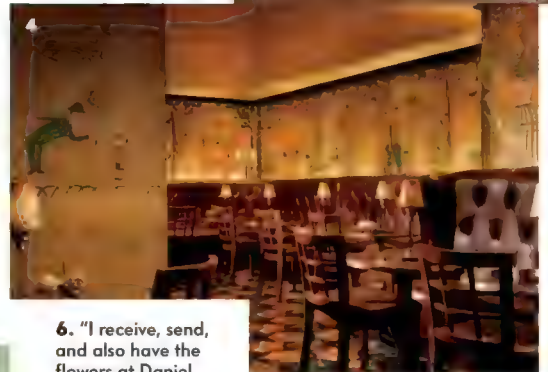


5



6. "I receive, send, and also have the flowers at Daniel done by **Buunch**. It's the way they are arranged and how they speak to nature, almost romantic." 7. "To a chef, the most important tool is his knife. **Korin** is always the store." 8. A **negroni** at Overstory, the Polo Bar, or Daniel's Laliqe Bar. 9. For a view of the city: **Summit One Vanderbilt**.

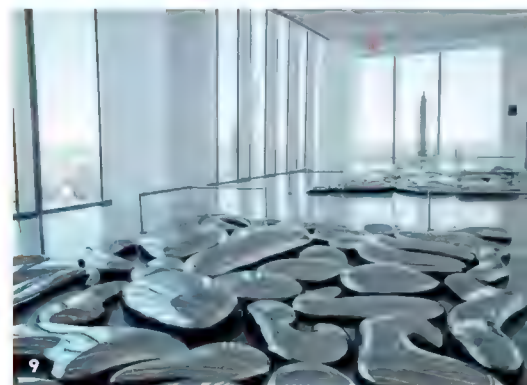
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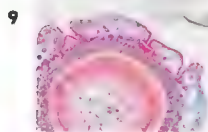
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7



9



Viva L'ITALIA!

From her kaftans to her wallpaper, designer J.J. MARTIN lives a life in Milan of glorious maximalism

■ Style File

EVERYDAY BAG: My Lutz Morris Parker (2). **BELOVED JEWELRY:** A giant Egyptian pendant gifted to me by [former Chanel global CEO] Maureen Chiquet (5). **TO LOUNGE:** L.G.R. for Blazé sunglasses (6), La DoubleJ kaftan (12), and ViBi Venezia venetian slippers (10).

■ On Wellness

BODY CARE: Verden Herbanum wash (1). **SKIN BOOST:** Phyto Nectars I Am Radiant (9). **DAILY RITUALS:** Breath work, chakra cleansing, Yin yoga, and multidimensional energy meditations. **FOR HEALING:** Weekly shamanic spiritual lesson with Lelama Sjarar.

■ For Pleasure

LISTENING TO: The *Footloose* soundtrack (4). **READING:** *We, the Arcturians (A True Experience)* by Norma J. Milanovich et al. **WATCHING:** *Il Gattopardo*. **INSPIRED BY:** The unnamed Franco-Flemish artist who designed this circa-15th-century millefleur tapestry (11).

■ At Home

ON THE WALL: My portrait painted by La DoubleJ's former design director, Molly Molloy, two very zen circle paintings done by my energy healer, Paolo Nicolò Ferraguti (3), and in my dining room, custom wallpaper based on collages I found in Bali painted by Kirsten Synge Kongsli. **ON THE SHELF:** My new book, *Mamma Milano* (7). **ON THE FLOOR:** A Tibetan tiger rug and Chinese carpet, both from the 1930s. **VINTAGE GEM:** A pair of 1950s curved walnut Carlo Ratti chairs. **MOST MAXIMAL:** My four closets.

■ The Menu

MORNING CUP: Dr. Linda Lancaster's Liver-Cleansing Drink, freshly made. **HOME-COOKED SPECIALTY:** Farro linguine with a tomato, olive, and caper sauce that I learned how to make by watching the chef at a tiny restaurant in Pantelleria. **INDULGENT DRINK:** Aperol spritz (8).

Turn the page for Martin's Milan travel guide.

MARTIN: ANIMA MARAZZI; GANDOLF: NECKLACE: BOOK: COURTESY OF J.J. MARTIN; TAPESTRY: ZALEEKI COLLECTION; COURTESY OF GALLERIA MOSHE TABERNA; PAINTING: COURTESY OF PAOLO NICOLÒ FERRAGUTI; FOOTLOOSE: COURTESY OF SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT; APEROL SPRITZ: GETTY IMAGES; ALL OTHERS: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS

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for every child

SYSTEMIC CHANGE
ACHIEVING EQUITY
IMPACT AT SCALE
SYSTEMIC CHANGE
ACHIEVING EQUITY
IMPACT AT SCALE

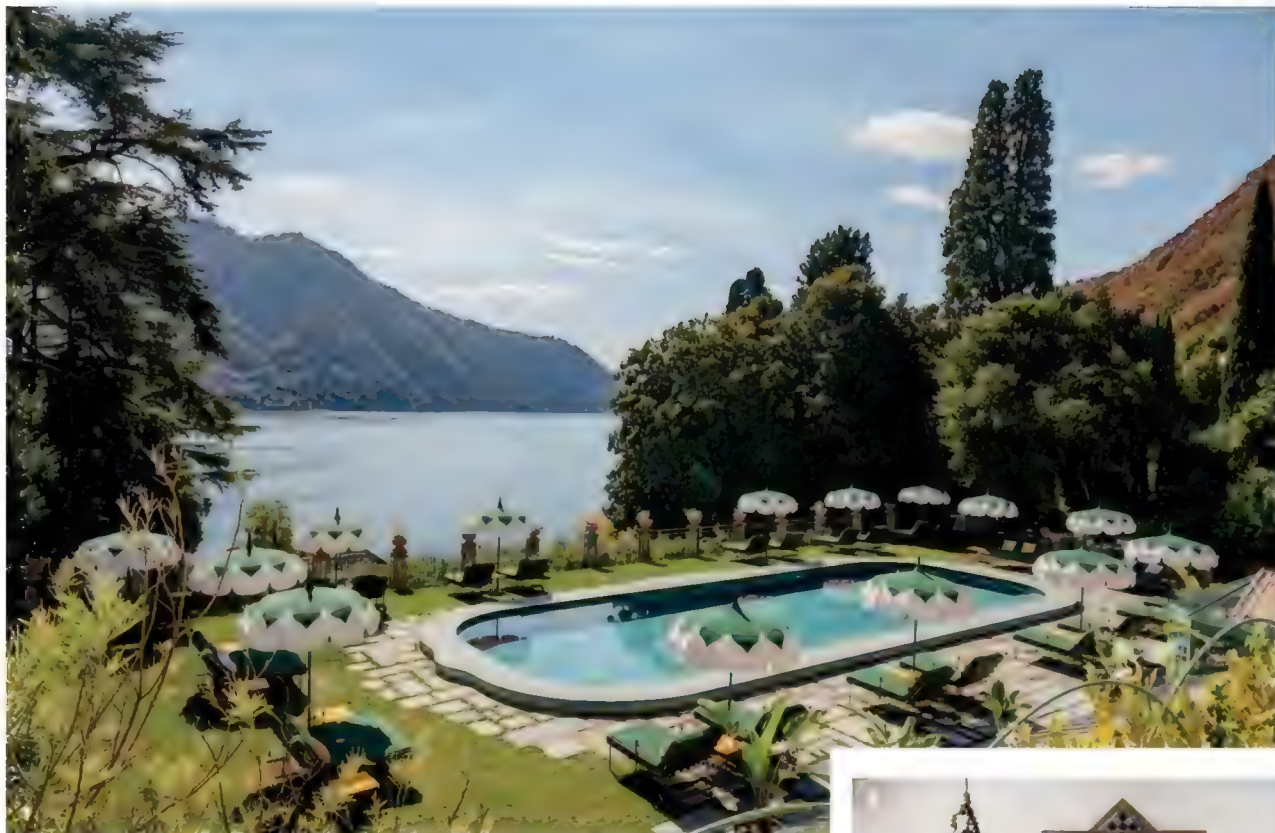
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PARTNER WITH US





■ *Around Milan*

MUST-SEE: Casa degli Atellani (5). **FOR PRINT LOVERS:** Bonvini 1909 (2). **VINTAGE:** Cavalli e Nastri. **DATE NIGHT:** Ratanà. **DESSERT:** Sacher torte from Pasticceria Cucchi. **BEST-KEPT SECRET:** The painted ceiling inside Chiesa di San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore (8). **BEAUTY BREAK:** Massage at You Off. **DAY TRIP:** Passalacqua in Lake Como (1). **LAKE SIDE:** Colville beach bag (3).

■ *To Keep the City Close:*

Inside Milan by Nicolò Castellini Baldissera (4). **SOUVENIR:** Shrink-wrapped Parmigiano Reggiano from Peck.

■ *On the Road*

TRAVEL DAY FOOTWEAR: High-top Nike Air Jordans (7). **CARRY-ON:** Pine green Paravel Aviator roller (6). **NEVER WITHOUT:** Australian Bush Flower Essences for jet lag, a Vodafone global cell phone plan, and Ram Dass YouTube lectures.



POOL: COURTESY OF PASSALACQUA/NIJEN ORTIZ. EXTERIOR: COURTESY OF CASA DEGLI ATELLANI. INTERIOR: COURTESY OF BONVINI 1909. CHIESA DI SAN MAURIZIO AL MONASTERO: ALAMY. ALL OTHERS: COURTESY OF THE BRANDS.

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Long Day's JOURNEY

Sure, geniuses should be allowed to make endless films. But what's everybody else's excuse? *By Natalie Jarvey*



WHEN BRAD PITT first read Damien Chazelle's script for *Babylon*, it was 180 pages, which translates to about three hours of screen time. "I said, 'This thing is a masterwork. But what's going to get cut?'" the actor later told *W*. "Because it's really hard just to get 120 pages in there. And he said, 'Nothing.'"

For better or what many reviewers said was worse, Chazelle was right. Everything the writer-director dreamed up seemed to have made the final cut, including an elephant's explosive bowels. Chazelle had previously made the acclaimed films *La La Land* and *Whiplash*, so he was a legitimate talent

to bank on. But *Babylon* reportedly needed to make about \$250 million to break even and pulled in just \$63 million worldwide. Pitt and Margot Robbie are not generally thought of as liabilities, to say the least, so might the movie's excess have been part of the problem?

The length of movies has been creeping up for years, even as streaming, TikTok, and absolutely everything else in our culture has rewired our brains to respond to shorter and shorter bursts of content. Because we've adapted to new rhythms of storytelling, bingeing a five-hour limited series is a guilty pleasure whereas watching a three-hour movie can be painful. Yet how often have you gone to the movies lately and been—in the words of Nicole Kidman—"not just entertained, but somehow reborn" in under two hours?

In 2002, the average length of the top 20 box office performers was one hour and 59 minutes. Twenty years later, moviegoers were gifted, if that's the word, with an extra 13 minutes of footage on average. Maybe you recently saw a kids movie or a horror flick that

was less than two hours long. And, yes, *Barbie* actually *was* everything, including a delicious one hour and 54 minutes. But for a host of reasons—including the fact that studios are trying to lure audiences to theaters with the kind of spectacles they can't get at home—even signing up to see a superhero movie or sequel these days likely means you're in for a marathon.

This year has served up the longest installments yet in both the *Indiana Jones* and *John Wick* franchises. Even the *Little Mermaid* remake is nearly an hour longer than the original animated film. And if you want to keep up with legendary directors, or legends in the making, you might need to download the RunPee app. Christopher Nolan's atomic-bomb epic and likely best picture nominee, *Oppenheimer*, clocks in at three hours—and required 11 miles of Imax film. Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*, another near-certain Oscar contender, is three hours and 26 minutes, about which Scorsese had this to say to *Deadline*: "It's a commitment.... I say to the audience out there, if there is an audience for this kind of thing, 'Make a commitment. Your life might be enriched.'"

THE LENGTH OF movies has been debated forever, for both creative and commercial reasons. Back in 2000, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* director Anthony Minghella lamented, "There's this



strange preoccupation in America with length, and in the most bizarre way: ‘We paid \$8, don’t give us too much.’” Elizabeth Frank, who leads programming for AMC Theatres, says the company has people looking into the length of movies to see if it truly constitutes a problem. Jason Blum, a producer known for horror films like *M3gan* and *Paranormal Activity*, has already come to a conclusion: “I think it’s a problem. Movies are too long.” For executives, of course, lengthy movies mean added production costs, marketing challenges, and fewer available showtimes to recoup their investment. “The studios are definitely not encouraging three-hour movies—that I can guarantee,” says a senior movie executive. “As a consumer, speaking for myself and on behalf of many other people like me: enough already!”

Geniuses like Andrei Tarkovsky and Stanley Kubrick made brilliant long movies, says Grant Singer, whose first feature, the crime thriller *Reptile*, debuts on Netflix this year. But the idea that a contemporary movie could be long, important, *and* a blockbuster? “It all starts with James Cameron,” he says. “He has proven that you can make hugely successful global sensations that are three-hour films and people will come to the box office.”

While audiences might make an exception for something titanic like

Avatar or *The Batman*, they have their limits. One studio executive, citing internal data, tells me that moviegoers become increasingly less interested in a movie the longer it is. Cate Blanchett was a force of nature in *Tár*, but the film’s two-hour, 38-minute run time may well have contributed to the fact that it made only \$6.7 million domestically. (Even overseas, where audiences are allegedly more sophisticated, it took in just \$22.3 million.) The drop-off in interest is said to be especially pronounced for parents. They’re more likely to skip a movie they’re

“The studios are definitely not encouraging THREE-HOUR MOVIES,” says one executive. “That I can guarantee.”

interested in if it’s longer than two hours, because the extra time means arranging extra childcare, or if they’re bringing the kiddos along, enduring even *more* kid content. “We joke that the difference between a two-hour, 59-minute movie and a three-hour movie is an hour,” the exec says. “It literally is the decision for people.”

So, apart from the genius loophole, why *have* movies become so long? To put it bluntly, as one top agent does, “Because producers have gotten so short.” As the sun set on superproducers like Harvey Weinstein—famously nicknamed “Harvey Scissorhands” because he cut movies down with such relish—no one rose to take their place. “The ability to work hand in glove with a world-class director to shape a movie—very few producers possess that skill or willingness today,” the agent says.

Directors, to extend the metaphor, are getting taller. There are only so many proven hitmakers, and it’s been a sellers’ market as the number of buyers keeps growing with Netflix, Amazon, Apple, and others jumping into the original-film game. On streaming, you don’t have to worry about showtimes or bathroom breaks anyway—that’s what the Pause button is for. Executives are still incentivized to make the best possible movie, but the conversation is a little different if a filmmaker feels strongly that they need those extra five (or 30) minutes. Who wants to be the executive who says no to Scorsese and loses him to a competitor?

When a director signs on, his contract—and let’s be real, it’s still almost always a man—states how long the film is expected to be and whether he has “final cut” (a.k.a. approval over all edits). Working with a filmmaker who has final cut doesn’t necessarily mean anything goes. If a film is running longer than the promised length, producers will encourage edits, and test screenings can be an important tool with particularly self-indulgent directors. One longtime producer suspects that fewer test screenings during the pandemic might have contributed to the glut of two-hour-plus films in recent years: “There’s nothing better to tell you that your movie is too long than looking at a sea of people who are shifting in their seats,” he says. That’s why, after *Bardo* fell flat at the Venice Film Festival, Alejandro Iñárritu decided to shave 22 minutes from his deeply personal film.

Blum, whose movies tend to be low-cost, under two hours, and popular with moviegoers, gives all his directors final cut. “But that doesn’t mean I’m a wallflower,” he says. “People who finance movies need to have more healthy, creative, real conversations with their filmmakers as opposed to just saying yes. I think the filmmakers want that too. They want partners. They may not listen to the opinion, but they don’t just want to do whatever. They want to have a conversation with people they trust—people who understand what they’re doing.” ■



SWAMP Things

Ron DeSantis won't hesitate to race Trump to the bottom. Take it from a native Floridian *By Carl Hiaasen*



HERE IN GUILT-FREE Florida we're often asked if Ron DeSantis is really worse than Donald Trump. Not long ago the question would have seemed ludicrous because Trump had set the bar of execrable behavior so high. Who could outpander the most prolific panderer of all time? Who could be worse for democracy than the person who snuggled up to murderous dictators, spoke fondly of white supremacists, smeared Mexican immigrants as rapists and killers, tried to overturn an election, and incited a goon siege of the Capitol? The list goes on.

Technically, the ex-president isn't a true Florida man; he's just another rich tax refugee. DeSantis is a native, one of our own, and he has proven himself to be just as thin-skinned, soulless, and vengeful as Trump. Betraying his political godfather to seek the Republican presidential nomination demanded more of DeSantis than casual disloyalty; he needed a metaphorical crowbar to pry his perpetually pinched lips from Trump's ass.

From then on, his strategy was to slither past Trump on the right. As governor he has delightedly signed new laws targeting the LGBTQ+ community, abortion rights, gun restrictions, voting liberties, conversations about the history of racism, and from his boundless well of spite, Disney. All that, plus—according to a campaign video—a personal endorsement from God, and

still DeSantis is polling a drab, distant second to Trump.

Clearly the governor isn't getting credit for being as awful as he is. Have people already forgotten that his mid-pandemic reversal on COVID vaccines killed off untold numbers of Floridians who'd naively looked to him for guidance? It takes the icy soul of a fentanyl dealer to factor customer mortality into your own marketing plan.

Although critics say DeSantis is Trump Lite, the two differ sharply. DeSantis isn't lazy, and he actually likes to read. Onstage he sticks to a script, while Trump prefers rambling bombast. (Some claim Trump has a better sense of humor, but it was DeSantis who appointed a January 6 rioter to the state board that oversees massage parlors.)

Trump has the big reputation for dodging questions, but DeSantis is hard-core slippery. While his wife, Casey, was undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer, DeSantis refused to confirm or deny that he'd received the newest COVID booster. Afraid to rile his new anti-vaccine base, the once masked and pro-vax governor clammed up from late December 2021 to mid-January 2022, when the virus raged. New cases in Florida topped 60,000 a day, filling ERs, ICUs, and funeral homes.

Everyone familiar with cancer is aware that chemotherapy can weaken immune systems, increasing one's vulnerability to COVID. Yet when asked if he got the booster shot, DeSantis wouldn't say no or yes, even if it was only to protect his wife. "Gutless" was how Trump described such dodges, but DeSantis showed his true self by resisting the pressure to set a good example, and to appear caring. (More than 89,000 Floridians have died of COVID, but the governor sustains his campaign vibe by not mentioning them. He has, however, revealed that Casey DeSantis "responded very well" to her chemo treatments.)

As a hands-on autocrat, DeSantis methodically built the most regressive, intrusive, and punitive state bureaucracy in the nation. Despite a hurricane of legal challenges, the governor continues to gloat about his no-win feud with Disney, his venomous "Don't say gay" crusade, his useless election police, and his random fly-outs of non-Florida migrants to blue states. DeSantis has fearlessly arranged for all these expensive stunts to be paid for with public dollars. Abetted by zombie supermajorities in the state House and Senate, DeSantis has spearheaded so many defective laws that this year nearly \$16 million was budgeted for legal expenses, much of it to keep pace with the growing torrent of litigation.

Clearly, he is a more agile swamp dweller than Trump. Forget about garish Mar-a-Lago—did you know the governor's mansion in Tallahassee has a "cabana"? Amenities include that expensive golf simulator machine provided by Mori Hosseini, a wealthy developer who has also let the governor use his private plane.

As reported by *The Washington Post*, companies controlled by Hosseini donated more than \$360,000 to political groups that backed DeSantis's re-election bid in 2022. Three weeks after his landslide win, the state announced it was setting aside \$92 million in unspent COVID relief money for the building of an Interstate 95 interchange at the future site of a sprawling Hosseini retail and housing project near Daytona Beach. Ironically, the funds were plucked from President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan, which DeSantis had previously denounced.

Trump is too scattered to orchestrate such windfall paybacks for major donors. DeSantis is a detail guy. For instance, when devising his scheme to relocate Colombian and Venezuelan migrants using private flights, the governor's team made sure that the million-dollars-plus in state payments went to a small Panhandle aviation company with GOP connections.

Another bad thing that DeSantis does better than Trump is nullify legitimate elections. In 2020, Key West voters overwhelmingly passed three ballot

initiatives aimed at limiting the size and number of cruise ships docking at their small port. The goliath vessels churn trails of heavy silt that clouds the fishing waters and damages fragile reefs. But after companies owned by the operator of Key West's busiest cruise pier gave \$1 million to the governor's political action committee, DeSantis signed legislation barring local governments from restricting commerce in their own ports, wiping out the islanders' vote. Today the cruise liners are back, towering grotesquely above Key West's historic waterfront.

Almost all the governor's despotic fantasies have come true, including a new law that makes secret his past and future travels while on the state payroll. He also asserted more power over

the university system, allowing him to install far-right loyalists to take over New College, a small, liberal-leaning school in Sarasota. Another swampy move was importing ex-Nebraska GOP senator Ben Sasse to be president of the University of Florida at an annual base salary of \$1 million. Pitbull is better qualified for the job and would probably do it for free.

Trump scoffs at his rival's "anti-woke" obsession, but DeSantis has succeeded at stifling discussions of gender identity and Black history in public education. Books are now being yanked from Florida school libraries and classrooms for review if just one person complains. That person often belongs to the Moms for Liberty, the governor's favored purge squad. Novels by a span of authors from

Judy Blume to Aldous Huxley to Toni Morrison (and, full disclosure, myself) have been pulled from school shelves. A Miami Lakes pre-K-through-eighth-grade school actually flagged "The Hill We Climb," Amanda Gorman's best-selling inauguration poem, as inappropriate for younger children after a parent claimed to have deciphered "hate messages" in the verses.

The Gorman backlash drew a Trump-worthy response from DeSantis: "This is some book of poems. I never heard of it. I had nothing to do with any of this."

In Indian River County the school board recently repealed a "racial equity policy" that had been in place three years with strong support from teachers and Black leaders. The board chair admitted that she acted out of fear of retribution by the governor, and drafted a broader version of the policy. Meanwhile, the NAACP issued an extraordinary travel advisory for Florida, warning that under DeSantis, the state is waging "an all-out attack" on people of color, LGBTQ+ residents, ballot rights, immigrants, women's reproductive rights, and free speech. The governor lost not a wink of sleep. Like Trump, he knows he can't win a tight national election if the racists and homophobes stay home.

DeSantis's most unpopular moves are meant to impress ultraconservatives in the upcoming primaries. His six-week abortion limit would have been crushed in Florida if it had appeared as a ballot referendum. The same goes for his weakening of gun laws in a state where two of the country's worst mass shootings have occurred, the massacres at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

Fans needn't worry about DeSantis suddenly sprouting a conscience or veering toward the political center. As of midsummer, he still hadn't admitted that he rolled up his sleeve for a COVID booster when his wife was in chemotherapy. Only a moron or a monster would risk the life of a sick loved one by spurning the most up-to-date vaccine, and DeSantis isn't a moron.

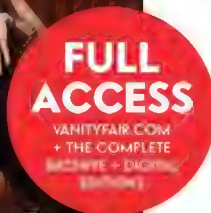
Look at what he's done to Florida, then imagine what he would do as president. Rock bottom is the limit, if only America would give him a chance. ■



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Bunny's

Bar



STYLED BY NICOLE CHIAPOTEAU

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SZILVESZTER MAKÓ

VANITY FAIR

Year...

BENITO ANTONIO MARTÍNEZ OCASIO SWEARS HE'S TAKING A BREATHER FROM ULTRA-MEGA GLOBAL SUPERSTARDOM TO ENJOY LIFE IN PUERTO RICO AND SOME DOWNTIME WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND. JUST DON'T ASK HIM ABOUT THE ALBUM HE'S ABOUT TO RELEASE



of Rest and

Relaxation



BY
MICHELLE
RUIZ

It's 10 minutes past noon in the historic San Juan neighborhood of Miramar,

and Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio is hiding just out of sight, in a coral-colored speakeasy behind a ghost kitchen on a street that snakes to the beach. The chameleonic reggaeton supernova known as Bad Bunny is sitting at a corner table before an ever-growing feast of garlic knots and meatballs and two untouched pizzas, one pepperoni, one Hawaiian.

For once, he's doing nada, the 29-year-old tells me in his blithe baritone. "It's been my quietest day, with nothing to do." This latest trip home came on a whim. "Summer came, a couple of great reggaeton songs came out, and I said, 'I'm off. I'm going to Puerto Rico—like a vagabond.'"

Martínez had declared a year of rest after cementing himself as one of the most thrillingly prolific artists working today, a powerhouse whose superlatives include a Grammy album of the year nomination, more Spotify streams in 2022 than Beyoncé or Taylor, and the launch of the highest-grossing tour ever by a Latin artist, *El Último Tour del Mundo* (in support of two of the three albums he'd released in 2020 while the rest of us were dabbling in tie-dye). After the final stop, Martínez dropped another album: the culture-cracking critical obsession *Un Verano Sin Ti*, a sex-drenched beach party with a streak of political resistance. Then, he embarked on a second 2022 tour, The World's Hottest, shattering Ed Sheeran's record for highest grossing (though Taylor and Beyoncé may beat them both this year). Then he headlined Coachella—the first Latin artist ever. Somewhere in all this, there's Kendall Jenner.

And now an album this fall, about which Martínez—a master of surprise reveals—is insistently coy (as is his publicist). Said album is the subtext of our interview, but the performer, who's been more likely to midnight-release on Thanksgiving or plant curiosity seeds via a fake Bugatti ad, is still reticent about confirming its existence. When I congratulate him on the forthcoming record, he deadpans: "Who told you that?" In Puerto Rico and Los Angeles, he's been experimenting with a new musical mood. "I am playing around and enjoying myself, letting go. I'm being inspired a lot by the music of the '70s"—across genres, in both Spanish and English—"but I'm not sure if this is going to shape my music, generally or just one song."

One thing he promises: "It's impossible that the album that comes after *Un Verano Sin Ti* will sound like it—never, ever. I am always going to look for a way to do something new." And yet, he says he knew *Un Verano Sin Ti* would be his biggest album yet.

"How did you know?" I ask.

"Because I know everything" is his arch reply.

Bad Bunny's fifth studio release has the potential to be his most personal. "Now more than ever," he says, "I feel more confident in talking about what I think, what I feel, and how I am living through my music."

On this tropically humid Monday in July, however, it is still his so-called year of relaxation. "I've eaten about 70 croquetas," he tells me in Spanish as still more plates arrive.

He's been wearing the same outfit every day for days—a striped polo, moisture-wicking shorts, and squishy slides, all in buttery shades of beige. His thicket of curls is topped with a backward snapback. He has piano fingers, a cropped circle beard, and pristine teeth. The only stealth hints at his global superstardom—other than the fact that my cab driver just declared his fealty—are a few diamonds here and there, including on the face of what looks like a women's Chanel watch on his wrist. His trademark septum piercing is conspicuously missing—he wanted to change it up, he said, to be more relaxed. He hasn't even been working out lately.

"It is too much and your mental health can be impacted," Martínez says when I ask about his well-being. "There are days where I feel strong and powerful," but from time to time, he says, "I feel vulnerable. There are days where I feel like I can't handle my own life, you know what I mean?"

BEFORE BAD BUNNY was Bad Bunny, he was actually a very good bunny: choirboy in the Catholic church where his mother, Lysaurie Ocasio, served as a devout congregant. "I learned that I was the best in the choir and I worked the hardest," he says, laughing, though he's not kidding. Church was hot and boring, but it affirmed his passion for music at a foundational age. Though he's popularly known for spitting staccato beats, listen closely and his discography reveals an expansive, confident range. Even the seemingly offhand "eys" that punctuate his songs are filled with pathos.

Martínez was an imaginative child. The son of Ocasio, a teacher, and Tito Martínez, a truck driver, Benito Antonio eschewed sports, preferring to play-wrestle with action figures; his little brothers, Bernie and Bysael, hatched storylines for each toy. "I am a person who always liked to live in my own world," he says. Lucha libre captivated all three boys, perhaps explaining why, even now, Martínez does not consider himself too prestigious to moonlight as a WWE star, appearing to slam a guitar into Mike "The Miz" Mizanin at Wrestlemania. "I liked everything—the creativity, the characters, the fact that each wrestler has his

own entrance song, like a soundtrack that identifies you," Martínez explains. The clothes, too. Those neon briefs and bedazzled belts laid the groundwork for Bad Bunny's eventual ascent of the Met Gala steps in a Burberry boiler dress, or in backless Jacquemus, his white rosette cape scraping the carpet. Martínez never quite blended. "Benito was the class clown," says Jomar Dávila, his personal photographer and friend since age 11. "He was always a very smart kid, too—super funny and outspoken."

Influenced by his mother's penchant for pop, his father's traditional taste for salsa and merengue, and his personal pull to Latin trap, in 2016, he began uploading his own songs to SoundCloud. He anointed himself Bad Bunny after an infamous-among-his-family Easter photo. What happened next is legend: While enrolled at the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo, where he

YEAR OF THE BUNNY

Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, photographed in Puerto Rico in July.

Menswear editor, Miles Pope.
Earrings (throughout) by Maria Tash (left ear) and XIV Karats.

Page 35: shirt, tie, socks, and bag by Bottega Veneta; shorts by Dior Men; belt by Artemas Quibble.

Previous spread: shirt by Etro; pants by The Row; shoes by Prada; belt by Artemas Quibble; necklace (in hand) by Tiffany & Co. Elsa Peretti.

TRANSLATION ASSISTANCE FROM JOHN NEWTON

studied communications and bagged groceries at Econo on the side, one of his songs—“Diles” (“Tell Them”), a braggadocious track about his sexual prowess with a reverent nod to female pleasure—caught fire. His origin story carries a hint of the divine, though Martínez doesn’t attend Mass anymore. “God is everywhere,” he told me, “so why do I need to go to church?” He landed his first record deal.

When Martínez was growing up, traveling to the capital of San Juan from his hometown, almost 30 miles east, was a special occasion. He first left when he was 17, and he says “it was like crossing a frontier.” By 2018, a baby-faced Bad Bunny was rendezvousing with Cardi B and J Balvin on “I Like It,” which hit number one in America. He rapped 99 percent en español, a choice that would become more potent with time. Martínez has built his solo career on the idea that Latin music is limitless—he pays homage to mambo, merengue, bomba, and bachata while creating provocative mixes with punk, grunge, EDM, and dembow; his 2018 debut album, *100pre*, a stylized expression of *por siempre* (“forever”), featured both Ricky Martin and Drake. His mounting success sent the essential message that “crossing over” should not demand the compromise of his native Spanish—specifically, in his consonant-cutting Puerto Rican dialect. His 2020 *El Último Tour del Mundo* became the first Spanish-speaking album ever to reach number one on the Billboard global chart, a feat he repeated with the ubiquitous *Un Verano Sin Ti*.

The concept of the crossover—whether by switching to English or otherwise making oneself more palatably, more stereotypically, Latino—“is dead now,” Martínez says. He points to the chart success of “Titi Me Preguntó,” a bop about his global roster of girlfriends. He’s been called the first reverse crossover artist, an invitation to non-Spanish speakers to understand his songs if not his lyrics. “There were English songs that I didn’t know what the hell they were saying,” he posits, but it didn’t preclude him from becoming, for example, an ardent Ariana Grande fan.

Martínez is a little young to remember Martin’s energetic, bongo-beating “The Cup of Life” performance at the 1999 Grammys, widely credited as the catalyst for the “Latin explosion,” though he nods in recognition when I mention it. Bad Bunny opened this year’s Grammys with a modern complement, performing a medley of “El Apagón” (“The Blackout”), a searing anthem about Puerto Rican corruption and resilience, and “Después de la Playa,” a magnetic merengue dance party—all in Spanish. With the gravitas of a Jazz Age bandleader, Bad Bunny transported Puerto Rico’s San Sebastián street festival to Los Angeles’s Crypto.com Arena, bobbing cabezudos (customary papier-mâché heads) included. Taylor Swift shimmed; Jack Harlow clapped his gloved hands.

“Benito brings an energy that is just contagious,” says Dávila. He made the crowd “feel like they are there with him, not for him.”

It was supposed to be a midshow performance, according to Martínez, until producers caught his rehearsal and bumped him to the opener. Watching it compelled me to dance from my couch but also filled me with a kind of misty awe, this triumphant statement of Latin joy and pride in what has been a darkly oppressive era. “It was a special moment for me as well,” Martínez nods. But the

Grammys botched the handling of his language. Instead of translating the performance, closed captions simply read “singing in non-English,” instantly inspiring a viral meme. It was “so fucked up,” Martínez emphasizes, that he didn’t even realize what had happened at first. “It’s ugly to say that I saw it as normal. Then it was like, wow, wait a minute, what the hell? Why don’t they have someone? Knowing that I was going to be there....” And then, dismissing it altogether, he says, “I sing for those who want to listen to me and those who understand me.”

Un Verano Sin Ti made history as the first Spanish-language album nominated for album of the year, but Grammy voters passed over Bad Bunny—and Beyoncé’s heavily favored *Renaissance*—with a controversial upset by Harry Styles’s *Harry’s House*. Martínez claims relief, that it spared him an ego trip. “It wasn’t because I didn’t feel I was deserving or because I thought I couldn’t win. It was because I don’t really want to hear myself,” he said. “I know I was going to get emotional. It would have been powerful and hard, dealing with that pride.”

Instead, Bad Bunny won best música urbana album and Beyoncé took home R&B honors, fueling ongoing criticism that the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences consistently fails to endow its most hallowed honor on diverse artists, instead relegating them to niche categories. “Maybe they weren’t ready for a Spanish-language album to win the big prize,” Martínez says when I raise the criticism. “I didn’t even feel like [album of the year] had been stolen from me until the media started saying [it] and I saw that everybody thought I deserved the prize and everybody thought it was a robbery.... That’s when they kind of convinced me and I said, ‘Well, yes, it was a robbery then.’” Not that he holds it against the victor. Fans on TikTok spotted Martínez at a Styles concert in LA. “How was it?” I ask. “Brutal,” Martínez instantly replies in Spanish. *Killer*.

Martínez isn’t fluent in English, but he’s working on it by speaking. (We spoke to each other in Spanish and English.) Someday, with the right song or collaborator, he’ll sing in English, he says, but “I am never going to do it just because someone says I need to do it to reach a certain audience.” He references the Japanese lines at the end of his poppy reggaeton track “Yonaguni,” named for the Japanese island. “I was told that I had to sing in Japanese to reach the audience,” he recalled. “I almost didn’t do it because of that.” “Where She Goes”—his characteristically naughty Jersey club track speculated to be about Jenner—had sparked chatter that an English song was forthcoming. He can sense it’s become a thing. “It’s not like I hate the idea” of performing in English, he says. “It’s just that I feel more comfortable in my own language. I think in Spanish, I feel in Spanish, I eat in Spanish, I sing in Spanish.”

Already, “with some people, I speak English—with some specific people,” Martínez muttered. “With one of them, I couldn’t talk to her before.”

HIS ORIGIN STORY CARRIES A HINT
OF THE DIVINE, THOUGH MARTÍNEZ
DOESN’T ATTEND MASS ANYMORE.
“GOD IS EVERYWHERE, SO WHY DO
I NEED TO GO TO CHURCH?”

HORNDOGGERY IS A hallmark of the Bad Bunny brand. His lyrics are thick with sex, from anilingus to road head, and partners so wet, he could baptize himself. He must be the only ASCAP songwriter of the year honoree to trumpet, “I love the pussy of Puerto Rico.” His young fans like him impressionistically graphic, even if their abuelas don’t. “Talk to me honestly,” he says to me, adopting their perspective. “Don’t hide reality behind a disguise.”

Yet Martínez eschews stereotypical Latino machismo, and not just because he sports rainbow glitter manicures and couture skirts. His music is hypersexual and überspecific but not degrading. He’s filthy, sure, but he’s sensuous, rehashing his hookups with an almost holy worship.

“Sex is one of the most beautiful and deepest things in the world,” Martínez says, twisting off a garlic knot from a bed of creamed spinach. He and his publicist, Sujeylee Solá, laugh because, despite its prevalence in his songbook, he isn’t often asked about this topic. “Maybe I’m thinking about sex a lot during my free time. I have a lot of free time.”

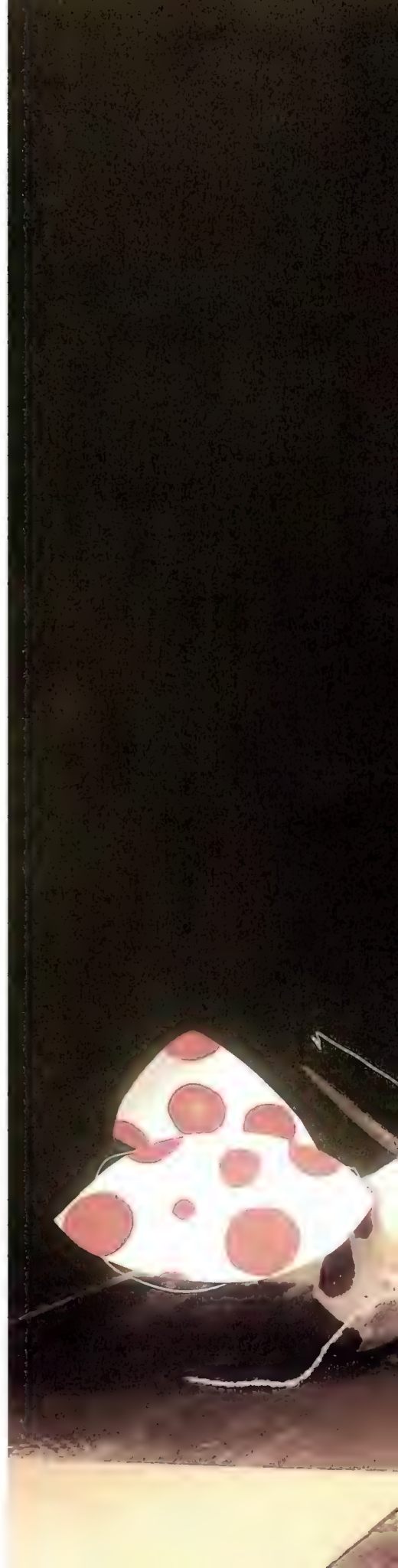
He’s been spending at least some of it with Jenner, a DeuxMoi blind that actually checked out. (“This single famous model sister was seen playing tonsil hockey with Bad Bunny at a private LA club last night,” read a thinly veiled anon tip in February.) Since then, Jenner and Martínez have embarked on a series of splashy dates, emerging in head-to-toe black leather from Giorgio Baldi, snapping selfies in prom pose while riding the same horse, perusing vinyls at a Sherman Oaks record store, and canoodling at a Drake concert. He arrived at our cover shoot in Puerto Rico wearing a choker dangling with a dainty *K* charm, which TikTokers believe belongs to Jenner (Solá asked him to take it off before being photographed). Some believe his line on Eladio Carrión’s “Coco Chanel” contains an allusion to Jenner: “The sun in PR is hotter than in Phoenix,” an alleged dis on Jenner’s ex Devin Booker, a guard for the Phoenix Suns.

But the romance instantly drew ire from Bad Bunny’s legion of fans, who are nothing if not devoted. She’s a Kardashian, proximally if not nominally, and Martínez is the antithesis of a nepo baby. More cuttingly, though, fans have framed the relationship as a form of cultural betrayal—that Martínez, who has held fast to his language and Puerto Rican-ness throughout his ascent, would date a non-Latina.

When I ask Martínez if the backlash went too far, he deflects, still not confirming or denying Jenner is his girlfriend, instead saying nobody, famous or not, is free from the insidiousness of shit talk. Bad Bunny’s extremely online fandom bleeds for him, not unlike the Beyhive, Swifties, or Little Monsters. They giveth streams, ticket sales, and round-the-clock parasocial adoration, and they feel equally free to rain criticism online. Martínez


Coat by **Louis Vuitton Men’s**; sweater and shoes by **Bode**; shorts by **Abodi**; socks by **American Trench**.

HORNDOGGERY IS A HALLMARK OF THE BAD BUNNY BRAND. “SEX IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND DEEPEST THINGS IN THE WORLD,” HE SAYS.









HE'D DREAMED OF L.A. SINCE HE WAS A KID WHO LIONIZED KOBE BRYANT AND THE LAKERS. NOW HE SITS COURTSIDE, IN COORDINATING SNAKESKIN BOOTS, WITH KENDALL JENNER.

accepts that he's beloved. There are days when he lets himself be hugged, but he doesn't take a particularly sunny or even diplomatic approach to the prospect of fans exerting control over his life. When one of his acolytes thrust a phone in his face during a rare vacation over the holidays, he hurled it into a bush.

"They don't know how you feel, they don't know how you live, they don't know anything, and I really don't want them to know," Martínez says. Solá had warned me before our interview not to probe about his relationship, and he makes it clear he does not want to speak on his private life. "I'm not really interested in clarifying anything because I have no commitment to clarify anything to anyone. I am clear and my friend Jomar"—he points across the table to Dávila—"is clear and my mother is clear. They are the only ones to whom I have to clarify anything. As for Juliana Dominguez from Mississippi"—a random fan's name, I'm pretty sure—"I have nothing I need to clarify to her. Never. About anything."

"There are people who say that artists have to put up with it," he adds. "I don't have to accept anything and everything because I wanted to be an artist. At the end of the day, you listen to me because you want to. I don't force you to."

Privacy is prickly for Bad Bunny, but Dávila notes that "people don't realize just how much Benito thinks about his fans. Everything he does in the studio is for him, but everything he does with what comes out of that studio"—impromptu album and song drops; back-to-back blockbuster tours—"is for his fans."

Dating Jenner was a crossover event, but ever-present paparazzi are only one component of the scrutiny. "It used to be a guy with a camera and a flash and they fuck with your eyes like that. Nowadays, everybody is a paparazzo," Martínez says. "Everyone is taking photos, everyone is recording." It's shadowy phone videos purported to be of Martínez and Jenner swaying together at a Frank Ocean show; TikToks depicting her walking ahead of him at a Lakers game. A few days after we meet, a fan video shows them out to dinner in Puerto Rico. "Nobody respects anybody's privacy," he says, "and not only my privacy as a celebrity, but yours. Are you famous? Is Michelle famous?"

"Not yet," I joke.

"Michelle is not famous, and people don't respect your privacy," he continues, "because if right now you go out there and your pants are ripped and you can see a butt cheek, or a pigeon shits on you, there's a bastard who will film you and take a picture of you."

Being with Jenner is Martínez's first (suspected) celebrity romance. In the past, he dated his UPR classmate Carliz De La Cruz Hernández, who is now suing him for \$40 million for use

of her voice in the Jason Derulo-esque "It's Bad Bunny, baby" intros on two songs. From 2017 until some time last year, Martínez was in a relationship with

Clothing by **Maison Margiela**; T-shirt by **Gucci**; shoes by **John Lobb**.

Puerto Rican jewelry designer Gabriela Berlingeri, with whom he documented their pandemic isolation in Puerto Rico (in one since-deleted video, she and Martínez, in drag for his “Yo Perreo Sola” [“I Twerk Alone”] video, passionately make out). Berlingeri also served as a collaborator, lending vocals to “En Casita,” a forlorn track from Bad Bunny’s surprise quarantine album and cameoing as his bride at the end of the “Titi Me Preguntó” video. How Berlingeri ended and when Jenner began remains private. Never clocking a breakup with Berlingeri, the initial DeuxMoi post about Jenner speculated that Berlingeri and Martínez might have an open relationship. (When I ask about that rumor, Martínez laughs heartily before Solá shuts down any comment.) Fans spotted Berlingeri in the VIP area for his Coachella performance in April this year, suggesting amicability; a bandana-masked Martínez and Jenner were also spotted at the festival.

He’s since deleted all of those quarantine posts and drastically scaled back his Instagram activity. Martínez isn’t in a headspace to engage with the comments. Then there’s the cringe factor. “It’s a bitch, social media. You put it out there and it’s forever. Like, man, in the future maybe you won’t feel the way you felt that day and you’ll see the photo and say, ‘Hell, why did I post that?’”

LATELY, MARTÍNEZ HAS been spending most of his time in Los Angeles, but lest anyone think he’ll go full Hollywood, he issues a few caveats. It’s only been seven months since “we”—he and his team—decided to relocate—temporarily—in order to get a “breath of fresh air.” He does not see himself in LA forever—“impossible.” He has said he considers himself a jibaro, slang for something approximating a country boy. Still, he’s not above the city’s sparkly mythology: He’d dreamed of LA since he was a kid who lionized Kobe Bryant and the Lakers. Now he sits courtside, in coordinating snake-skin boots, with Jenner.

Like Beyoncé and J.Lo and Elvis before him, Martínez is exploring the well-blazed path to hyphenated actor: “You could say that I have been investing a little bit more of myself in acting,” he says noncommittally. In the midst of 2022, he howled at the moon and body-slammed Brad Pitt as a machete-wielding Mexican assassin in *Bullet Train*. (He’s credited not as Bad Bunny but as Benito A. Martínez.) He’s already shared his first onscreen kiss with Gael García Bernal in the biopic *Cassandro*, about ’80s-era gay wrestler Saúl Armendáriz, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year and is slated for a Prime Video release. (García Bernal plays the title role and Martínez his lover.) And he guest-starred on *Narcos: Mexico* as a junior gang member, a part for which he humbly submitted an audition tape.

THE ZEALOUS FANS WHO HOUND HIM
 “DON’T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL,
 THEY DON’T KNOW HOW YOU LIVE, THEY
 DON’T KNOW ANYTHING, AND I REALLY
 DON’T WANT THEM TO KNOW.”

Clothing by **Prada**;
 shoes by **Maison
 Margiela**; socks by
Pantherella.

The WWE pedigree seemed suited to his casting in the title role of Marvel’s *El Muerto*, a *Spider-Man* spin-off about a luchador whose mask imbues him with superhuman strength. But after languishing in production limbo, the studio pulled the project from its release calendar, crushing Martínez’s dream role. When I ask him what happened, he hesitates. An awkward silence ripples across the table. “Next question,” asserts Solá, who’s seated at an adjacent booth. “I don’t know what to say,” Martínez replies, calling the issue “delicate.” Solá sharpens the point. “Obviously, it’s out,” she says of the film.

The next project he chooses could prove as unexpected as his mid-song transitions. “As a movie consumer myself, I’m not one to watch a lot of action movies. I’d even say it’s my least favorite genre,” Martínez tells me. “I would really like to play other kinds of things, like a little bit more drama, romance too, or comedy,” maybe “a history movie with a little action in it.” Citing the steamy alchemy between Bad Bunny and Rosalía in the video (and *Saturday Night Live* musical guest performance) for the morning-after duet “La Noche de Anoche,” I suggest an erotic thriller, the vaunted ’90s subgenre that gave us *Sliver* and *Body of Evidence*. He smiles gamely: “I think you’re right.”

BAD BUNNY IS already a subject of academic study. A graduate seminar at San Diego State University’s School of Journalism and Media Studies examines his sociopolitical impact on Latinx culture. At Wellesley College, he’s a 300-level American Studies class: Bad Bunny: Race, Gender, and Empire in Reggaeton.

Martínez is ripe for analysis as an artist born of a perilous political moment. His stratospheric rise coincided with Hurricane Irma’s and Maria’s devastation of Puerto Rico and the Trump administration’s woefully inadequate response. The president pelting paper towels on a supposed aid visit highlighted a lingering stench of colonialism in the US commonwealth, a place where America too often overlooks or outright forgets its own citizens.

Bad Bunny broke through at a time when Puerto Rico needed a hero. “When you put it that way, it sounds nice,” he demurs. “I think that’s what music and artists are there for, to save lives. Not in a way that announces, ‘I am going to save a life,’ but instead in a way that, in difficult times, the music is there to take your mind off of the trouble and to provide strength.”

Though he says he never set out to be a hero, he nevertheless became a member of the island’s “Ricky Renuncia” resistance movement, demanding the resignation of corrupt ex-governor Ricardo Rosselló. First, Bad Bunny and Residente (one of his reggaeton idols) paid Rosselló a surprise 2 a.m. visit at La Fortaleza, the governor’s residence, where they were eventually admitted for a chat with the embattled leader. A few months later, Bad Bunny cut his tour short to jet to San Juan: In mirrored sunglasses and a black mask, he towered above a mass of protesters on the back of a flatbed truck with Martin and Residente,





Shiny and sexy
in Brioni's
new for the
show by studio



"THERE ARE DAYS WHERE I FEEL STRONG AND POWERFUL," HE SAYS, BUT THEN "THERE ARE DAYS WHERE I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T HANDLE MY OWN LIFE, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?"

hoisting a Puerto Rican flag high. "The system, for years, decades, has taught us to keep quiet," he wrote on Instagram. "We need to hit the streets."

Bad Bunny has repeatedly funneled his political discontent into song, from the impromptu "Afilando los Cuchillos" ("Sharpening the Knives"), a protest rap written and recorded in a single day with Residente and iLe, and "Estamos Bien" ("We're Good"), a post-hurricane rallying cry. "More than 3,000 people have died and Trump's still in denial," he decried before debuting it on *The Tonight Show*. "El Apagón"—the anthem to which Bad Bunny opened the Grammys—takes aim at the continued plague of power outages after the privatization of the Puerto Rican power grid, which was taken over by LUMA Energy, a Canadian and Texan conglomerate, in 2021. "Fuck LUMA," Bad Bunny declared in no uncertain terms at a San Juan concert earlier this year. "This country belongs to us." Bad Bunny democratizes his performances at home, beaming them onto giant screens across the island, staging at least one free pop-up show atop a Gulf station.

Puerto Rico brims with Bad Bunny mythology now, and I wonder about the burden of representation for this one man, not yet 30, eating his croquetas for lunch. What pressures does he feel to be a portavoz—a spokesperson?

Martínez views his activism as a choice, not an artistic responsibility. "What I do, I do from my heart," he said. "I do it as my duty, but my duty as a Puerto Rican, as a human being... not as an artist. I believe that every human being has the duty to have empathy for others, to help others, to respect them, to always try to contribute something to society, to bring a positive change." Politicians, he says, are the ones most obliged, but do the least. He does not want to be "pigeonholed" as an artist. "I worry about those issues, but I also have my family, I have my partner, I have my nightlife—on Fridays I want to go to the club, on Sundays I want to go to the beach. That's life."

He seems to know where his voice is most needed and how to use it: He condemned the murder of trans Puerto Rican woman Alexa Negrón Luciano in 2020 with a T-shirt reading "They killed Alexa, not a man in a skirt"; he kissed a male backup dancer; he dressed in resplendent red-leather-swathed drag and prosthetic breasts in support of the feminist dance track "Yo Perreo Sola," which, amid violence against women in Latin America, advocated for a lady's right to shake her ass, unbothered, at the club. Bad Bunny's penchant for feminine fashion has sparked questions of queerbaiting—the ability of straight people to adopt traditionally queer styles and potentially wink at queer audiences without the retribution suffered by queer stars.

Suit by **Hermès**; shirt by **Tom Ford**; boots by **Alessandro Vasini**; hat by **T Playa**.

Throughout: hair products by **Oribe**; grooming products by **Tatcha**.

Martínez concedes that his sartorial choices may be more accepted, and yet rejection is deeply felt. "I get an endless number of negative comments and sexist and homophobic ones, without being homosexual, for dressing like that," he tells me. "Maybe the queer person suffers more, but it is not like I put on a skirt and go out and they say 'Look, how cool.' They're going to attack me

with all their force anyway." It's another delicate subject, he says. "You don't know the reasons why a person is wearing that. You weren't in his mind when he decided to put on a skirt or a blouse. You don't know what's inside him, what's in his heart." When I ask Martínez if dressing femme reflects a part of his identity, he suggests it's not that deep: "You do it because you want to and it makes you feel good and it makes you feel happy."

Here, at home, he can just be—not Bad Bunny, but Benito Antonio, his mother's baby. The Martínez Ocasios don't live much differently than they always have, he said, even if he impulse-bought a house in Dorado, a beachy enclave near Vega Baja, where he grew up—"the area where all the rich people and the gringos and millionaires move." Martínez never stays there; it doesn't feel like home. People assume he lives in a "30-room mansion," but he's not interested in ostentatiousness. "I've been looking for the perfect place in Puerto Rico to create my dream home for a long time," he says. He hasn't figured it out yet, but "I hope to live here forever."

Martínez suspects that his mom would like him to settle down eventually, complete a hallowed sacrament. "She would love for me to get married in the church," he smirks. Next, I say from experience with my own Catholic family members, they'll want you to produce grandchildren.

Does Martínez want those traditional milestones?

"No. I don't think so."

Ever?

"Not ever, but not now."

His year of rest and relaxation continues, though he recently featured on Tainy's summery, synth-infused track "Mojabi Ghost." "K-POP," which he called a long-in-the-works collaboration with rapper Travis Scott, ex-partner of Jenner's sister, Kylie, and The Weeknd, came out this summer. (There's a lyric from this new song that's speculated to be about Kris Jenner: "If your mom catches us, she'll ask me for a photo.") And Martínez toys with a return to the WWE ring—"my plan is to take the title from Roman Reign," he taunts, before admitting he's trying to avoid lucha libre. His last match, in which he defeated fellow Puerto Rican fighter Damian Priest, was just too painful. When he'll tour again, he has no idea. Halfway through touring, he'd think, "Fuck it, I'm tired," but the same way you miss school after a long summer vacation, "the desire always comes back."

It used to be awkward, the shock waves of family members when he'd return home. "Sometimes, they say, 'Hell, now he's this giant phenomenon, blah, blah, blah,'" Martínez recalls. He's settled on seeing his job like any other, comparing himself to a relative who went to work at a company on the mainland. "When he comes on vacation to Puerto Rico, they ask him, 'How are you doing over there?'" ■

GROOMING: YIELKA HUERTA; MANICURE: QUENTONH; TAILOR: REBECCA SUAREZ; SET DESIGN: GERARD SANTOS
PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY WORLDJUNKIES. FOR DETAILS, GO TO VFCOM/credits.



THE LAST DESCENT

Though the world wouldn't catch on until disaster struck, a tight-knit community of seafarers, explorers, and bold submariners worried for years that Stockton Rush's OceanGate implosion was all but guaranteed. SUSAN CASEY, author of *The Underworld*, reveals the hardest truths about the *Titan*



41.73° N, 49.95° W NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN JUNE 18, 2023

FATE CLEARED UP the weather, blew off the fog, and calmed the waves, as the submersible and its five passengers dived through the surface waters and fell into another world. They entered the deep ocean's uppermost layer, known as the twilight zone, passing creatures glimmering with bioluminescence, tiny fish with enormous teeth. Then they entered the midnight zone, where larger creatures ghost by like alien moons. Two miles down, they entered the abyssal zone—so named because it's the literal abyss.

Deeper means heavier: pressures of 5,000, then 6,000 pounds per square inch. As it descended, the submersible was gripped in a tightening vise. Maybe they heard a noise then, maybe they heard an alarm.

I hope they watched the abyss with awe through their viewport, because I'd like to think their last sights were magnificent ones.

AS THE WORLD now knows, Stockton Rush touted himself as a maverick, a disrupter, a breaker of rules. So far out on the visionary curve that, for him, safety regulations were mere suggestions. "If you're not breaking things, you're not innovating," he declared at the 2022 GeekWire Summit. "To me, the more stuff you've broken, the more innovative you've been."

In a society that has adopted the ridiculous mantra "move fast and break things," that type of arrogance can get a person far. But in the deep ocean, the price of admission is humility—and it's nonnegotiable. The abyss doesn't care if you went to Princeton, or that your ancestors signed the Declaration of Independence. If you want to go down into her world, *she* sets the rules.

And her rules are strict, befitting the gravitas of the realm. To descend into the ocean's abyssal zone—the waters from 10,000 to 20,000 feet—is a serious affair, and because of the annihilating pressures, far more challenging than rocketing into space. The subs that dive into this realm (there aren't many) are tested and tested

and tested. Every component is checked for flaws in a pressure chamber and checked again—and every step of this process is certified by an independent marine classification society. This assurance of safety is known as "classing" a sub. Deep-sea submersibles are constructed of the strongest and most predictable materials, as determined by the laws of physics.

In the abyss, that means passengers typically sit inside a titanium pressure hull, forged into a perfect sphere—the only shape that distributes pressure symmetrically. That means adding crush-resistant syntactic foam around the sphere for buoyancy and protection, to offset the weight of the titanium. That means redundancy upon redundancy, with no single point of failure. It means a safety plan, a rescue plan, an acute situational awareness at all times.

It means respect for the forces in the deep ocean. Which Rush didn't have.

UNFORTUNATELY, June 18, 2023, wasn't the first time I'd heard of Rush, or his company OceanGate, or his monstrosity of a sub. He and the *Titan* had been a topic of conversation talked about with real fear, on many occasions, by numerous people I met over the course of five years while reporting my book *The Underworld: Journeys to the Depths of the Ocean*. I heard discussions about the *Titan* as a tragedy-in-waiting on research ships, during deep-sea expeditions, at marine science conferences. I had my own troubling encounter with OceanGate in 2018 and had been watching it with concern ever since.

Everyone I met in the small, tight-knit world of manned submersibles was aware of the *Titan*. Everyone watched in disbelief as Rush built a five-person cylindrical pressure hull out of filament-wound carbon fiber, an unpredictable material that is known to fail suddenly and catastrophically under pressure.

It was as though we were watching a horror movie unfold in slow motion, knowing that whatever happened next wouldn't be pretty. But like screaming at

the screen, nothing that came out of anyone's mouth made any difference.

IN DECEMBER 2015, two years before the *Titan* was built, Rush had lowered a one-third scale model of his 4,000-meter sub-to-be into a pressure chamber and watched it implode at 4,000 psi, a pressure equivalent to only 2,740 meters. The test's stated goal was to "validate that the pressure vessel design is capable of withstanding an external pressure of 6,000 psi—corresponding to...a depth of about 4,200 meters." He might have changed course then, stood back and reconsidered. Instead, OceanGate issued a press release stating that the test had been a resounding success because it "demonstrates that the benefits of carbon fiber are real."

Rush didn't even break stride. He ran right on ahead, plowing hard into his director of marine operations, David Lochridge. Lochridge had emigrated from Scotland to work for OceanGate—selling his home in Glasgow, moving to Washington State with his wife and daughter. Unlike many of his new colleagues, Lochridge was an established pro: a submersible and remote-operated-vehicle pilot, a marine engineer, an underwater inspector for the oil and gas industry. He'd piloted rescue subs for the British navy.

By January 2018, the *Titan* was nearly completed, soon to begin its sea trials. But first Lochridge would have to inspect the sub and pronounce it fit to dive. And that wasn't going to happen.

Lochridge had been watching the sub's progress with ratcheting alarm. He'd argued with OceanGate's engineering director, Tony Nissen; OceanGate had responded by refusing to let Lochridge examine the work on the sub's oxygen system, computer systems, acrylic viewport, O-rings, and the critical interfaces between its carbon fiber hull and titanium endcaps. (Nissen did not respond to requests for comment.)

When Lochridge voiced his concerns, he was ignored. So he inspected the *Titan* as thoroughly as he could. Then he

presented Rush with a 10-page “Quality Control Inspection Report” that listed the sub’s problems. “Verbal communication of the key items I have addressed in my attached document have been dismissed on several occasions,” Lochridge wrote on the first page, “so I feel now I must make this report so there is an official record in place.” These issues, he added, were “significant in nature and must be addressed.”

Lochridge listed more than two dozen items that required immediate attention. These included missing bolts and improperly secured batteries, components zip-tied to the outside of the sub. O-ring grooves were machined incorrectly (which could allow water ingress), seals were loose, a highly flammable material lined the *Titan*’s interior. Hosing looped around the sub’s exterior, creating an entanglement risk—especially at a site like the *Titanic*, where spars, pipes, and wires protrude everywhere.

Yet those deficiencies paled in comparison to what Lochridge observed on the hull. The carbon fiber filament was visibly coming apart, riddled with air gaps, delaminations, and holes—and there was no way to fix that short of tossing the hull in a dumpster. The manufacturing process for carbon fiber filament is exacting. Interwoven carbon fibers are wound around a cylinder and bonded with epoxy and cured in an oven for seven days. The goal is perfect consistency; any mistakes are baked in permanently.

Given that the hull would be “seeing such immense pressures not yet experienced on any known carbon hulled vehicle we run the risk of potential interlaminar fatigue due to pressure cycling,” Lochridge wrote, “especially if we do have imperfections in the hull itself.” The hull would need to be scanned to reveal the extent of its flaws.

Scanning the hull shouldn’t be a problem, should it? Lochridge noted in another document that OceanGate had previously stated the hull would be scanned. Spoiler alert: The hull was not scanned. “The OceanGate engineering team does not plan to obtain a hull scan and does not believe the same to be readily available or particularly effective in any event,” the company’s lawyer, Thomas Gilman, wrote in March 2018. Instead, OceanGate would rely on “acoustic monitoring”—sensors on the *Titan*’s hull that would emit an alarm when the carbon fiber filaments were audibly breaking.

Lochridge’s report was concise and technical, compiled by someone who clearly knew what he was talking about. Rush’s response was to fire Lochridge immediately; serve him *and* his wife with a lawsuit (although Carole Lochridge didn’t work at OceanGate) for breach of contract, fraud, unjust enrichment, and misappropriation of trade secrets; threaten their immigration status; and seek to have them pay OceanGate’s legal fees.

According to the company, Lochridge had “manufactured a reason to be fired.” He had once “mooned” OceanGate staff through the large viewing window, and had “repeatedly refused to accept the veracity of information provided by the Company’s lead engineer and repeatedly stated he did not approve of OceanGate’s research and development plans....”

Now unemployed, distressed by OceanGate’s allegations, and beset with legal bills, Lochridge was in a vulnerable position. He countersued for wrongful

accessible to advanced scuba divers, 18 of whom have died there. Rush was headed down to “capture sonar images of the shipwreck” with Lochridge and three clients.

I learned of what happened next from two sub pilots from other companies, who each heard it from OceanGate personnel. I also reviewed correspondence related to OceanGate’s lawsuit against Lochridge and his wife, in which Lochridge describes the incident. (Lochridge declined to be interviewed.)

As chief pilot, Lochridge had created a dive plan for how to approach the wreck. Any entanglement hazard demands caution: touching down at least 50 meters away and surveying the site before coming any closer. Rush disregarded these safety instructions. He landed too close, got rolled by the current, managed to wedge the sub beneath the *Andrea Doria*’s crumbling bow, and descended into a full-blown panic. Lochridge tried to take the helm, but Rush refused to let



termination and sent his inspection report to the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration. OSHA, in turn, passed it to the Coast Guard.

L OCHRIDGE HAD SAVED Rush from himself at least once before. In June 2016, Rush piloted OceanGate’s shallow-diving sub, the *Cyclops 1*, to the *Andrea Doria*, a hulking 700-foot ocean liner that had sunk in 1956 off Nantucket, in a patch of the Atlantic known for its murky fog and seething currents. The ship lies at 240 feet, cobwebbed with discarded fishing lines. At that depth, it is

him, melting down for over an hour until finally one of the clients shrieked, “Give him the fucking controller!” At which point Rush hurled the controller, a video-game joystick, at Lochridge’s head. Lochridge freed the sub in 15 minutes.

The expedition had been planned to include 10 dives, but instead it ended abruptly, with OceanGate citing “adverse weather conditions.” After returning to shore in Boston, Rush held a press conference. “We were able to view the

Stockton Rush, who cofounded OceanGate.
Previous spread: OceanGate’s *Titan* sub.

OceanGate's onetime director of marine operations, David Lochridge (foreground), who raised concerns about the company's engineering. Opposite: PH Nargeolet, who died in the *Titan* implosion.

Andrea Doria area for nearly four hours, which is more than 10 times longer than scuba divers can," he announced. The dive, OceanGate's website noted, had "focused on the bow of the vessel."

WRITING THIS NOW, I feel a variety of emotions. Empathy for the families of those aboard the doomed *Titan*. Despair for the "mission specialists" whose trust in OceanGate was so misplaced: Shahzada Dawood, Suleman Dawood, and Hamish Harding. Sadness, because I knew and admired PH Nargeolet—a deep-sea icon whose expertise on the *Titanic* led to his fatal association with Rush. PH and I sailed together in the Pacific on the 2019 Five Deeps Expedition, when explorer Victor Vescovo piloted a revolutionary sub, the *Limiting Factor*, to the deepest spots in all five of the earth's ocean basins.

Vescovo had commissioned the *Limiting Factor* in 2015 and hired PH as his technical adviser. Happily, PH didn't have much to do. The *Limiting Factor* was built by Triton Submarines, a company known for its high quality, smart designs, whose cofounder and president, Patrick Lahey, is regarded as the world's most experienced submersible pilot. Vescovo's sub was certified—at great cost and difficulty, over several years—by senior inspection engineer Jonathan Struwe from Det Norske Veritas (DNV), an international marine classification society that is the gold standard for safety.

And my God, the testing. Every piece of the *Limiting Factor* was pressure-tested to 20,000 psi, equivalent to a depth of 43,000 feet—20 percent greater than full ocean depth. Triton built its own state-of-the-art pressure chambers in Barcelona, Spain, but the only high-powered pressure chamber large enough to fit the passenger sphere was located in St. Petersburg, Russia, so the four-ton titanium orb was shipped halfway around the



world. For days the sphere was squeezed mercilessly, simulating dives to depths beyond any existing on earth. Afterward, it showed zero evidence of fatigue. "Even millions of cycles would not adversely affect it," Lahey told me.

Struwe dived with Lahey to 35,800 feet—he wanted to, but also he had to. How else could he certify the *Limiting Factor* worthy of the first-ever DNV class approval for repeated dives to "unlimited depth"? Struwe was so integral to the sub's success that Lahey considered him to be a codesigner.

All this made Rush look awfully foolish as he trash-talked the classification societies. "Bringing an outside entity up to speed on every innovation before it is put into real-world testing is anathema to rapid innovation," he complained in a blog post. His sub was simply too advanced for the uninitiated. But Rush also used slippery language to infer to clients that the *Titan* would be classed: "As an interim step in the path to classification, we are working with a premier classing agency to validate *Titan*'s dive test plan."

"He actually had the DNV logo up on his website for a time," Lahey recalled. "I told Jonathan Struwe about it and he called Stockton and said, 'Take it down, and take it down now.'"

WHEN I BOARDED Vescovo's ship in Tonga, I had already digested Nargeolet's incredible five-page résumé. It was given to me by Captain Don Walsh, who'd commanded the bathyscaphe *Trieste* in 1960, when he and Jacques Piccard made history by diving 35,800 feet to the Mariana Trench's Challenger Deep, the ocean's absolute nadir. Walsh was 87 years old when I met him in 2019; he had dedicated his entire legendary career to deep-sea science, engineering, and exploration. "PH is kind of my parallel on the French side," he told me. "He's a walking history."

Nargeolet had been a decorated commander in the French navy, the captain of France's 6,000-meter sub, the *Nautilus*, and leader of his country's deep submergence group. As commanding officer of the French navy's explosive ordnance disposal team, he de-mined the English Channel, the North Sea, and the Suez Canal.

I felt awed to meet him, and a bit intimidated. But Nargeolet was a deeply humble man. He talked about how much he loved the ocean, how diving brought him a sense of peace beyond anything attainable on land. He described how the *Nautilus*'s pilots would stop for lunch on the seafloor, laying a tablecloth, breaking out silverware, and decanting a bottle of wine. What's your favorite place to dive? I asked him. "Volcanic vents," he replied without hesitation.

PH also loved the *Titanic*: He made his first manned dive to the wreck in 1987 and had revisited the site more than 30 times. No one knew the ship's history as

"TITAN COULD NOT GET CLASSED BECAUSE IT WAS BUILT OF THE WRONG MATERIAL AND IT WAS BUILT THE WRONG WAY."

intimately as he did. He laughed as he explained why he got a kick out of seeing the *Titanic*'s swimming pool: "Because it looks like it's empty and it's full of water! You don't see the surface, you know?"

One morning, as the *Limiting Factor* was being launched, I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder: I was standing too close to the winch. Nargeolet guided me to a safer spot, cautioning me in his lovely French accent: "When something goes wrong, it goes wrong very fast."

IF EMPATHY AND sadness were the only emotions I felt, I'd be able to sleep better. But I am also angry. Angry at Rush's disrespect for the deep ocean, a realm he professed to want to explore but in reality did not understand. Angry because five people are dead and many others were jeopardized after Rush was warned for years that his sub wasn't fit for purpose.

My anger is also personal, because when I first heard about OceanGate back in 2018, I was just beginning to learn about submersibles, just beginning to report my book. I didn't yet know how *insane* the *Titan* was. I didn't know the 4,000-meter sub's viewport was certified to only 1,300 meters. I wanted desperately to dive to abyssal depths but at the time couldn't see a way to do it. The few vehicles in the world that can dive below 10,000 feet were all dedicated to science.

Then suddenly there was Rush, holding forth about how his brilliant new sub would take people to see the *Titanic* and saying things like, "If three quarters of the planet is water, how come you can't

SURELY, PEOPLE IN THE SUBMERSIBLE WORLD THOUGHT, RUSH WOULDN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS? SURELY, HE WOULD COME TO HIS SENSES?

access it?" and "I want to change the way humanity regards the deep ocean." I wasn't very interested in diving to the gruesome *Titanic*, but I was *extremely* interested in diving to 13,000 feet.

I called OceanGate and spoke to a marketing executive, who told me the 2019 *Titanic* trips were nearly sold out, but there would be future expeditions even deeper: "The end goal is not 4,000 meters. We're already building to go to 6,000 meters." This was possible because of Rush's many advanced innovations, she explained. The *Titan*'s pressure hull would be made of "space-grade" carbon fiber, monitored by an array of acoustic sensors. "Steel just implodes," she said with assurance, as if this was something that had ever happened. "But carbon fiber gives a warning 1,500 meters before implosion. It makes very specific snapping sounds. There's no other acoustic hull-monitoring system in the world."

True. No other deep-sea submersible in the world had such a system. Because no other deep-sea sub needed one.

FORTUNATELY, I KNEW enough to speak to a few people before I got anywhere near the *Titan*. One phone call was all it took.

Terry Kerby, the chief pilot of the University of Hawaii's two deep-sea subs, recoiled when I asked him about OceanGate. "Be careful of that," he warned. "That guy has the whole submersible community really concerned. He's just basically ignoring all the major engineering rules." He paused, then added emphatically: "Do *not* get into that sub. He is going to have a major accident."

Kerby referred me to marine engineer Will Kohnen for a detailed explanation of why the *Titan* was "just a disaster." Kohnen is the chair of the Marine Technology Society's Manned Underwater Vehicles Committee. He helped write the class rules for submersibles, and had decades of experience in the field. And Kohnen, a straight-shooting French Canadian, knew all about the *Titan*. "It's been a challenge to deal with OceanGate," he said, then launched into a two-hour explanation of the reasons why.

The bottom line? A novel submersible design was welcome—but *only* if you were willing to do the Herculean amount of testing to prove that it was safe, under the gimlet eye of a classification society. OceanGate decided that process would be too long and expensive, Kohnen said, "and they were just going to do whatever they wanted."

His committee had recently written a letter to Rush—signed by Kohnen and 37 other industry leaders—expressing their "unanimous concern" about the *Titan*'s development and OceanGate's "current 'experimental' approach." Rush needed to stop pretending that he was working with DNV and start doing it, stop misleading the public, stop breaching "an industry-wide professional code of conduct we all endeavor to uphold." The group concluded by asking Rush to "confirm that OceanGate can see the future benefit of its investment in adhering to industry accepted safety guidelines...." The letter, which has now been widely publicized, was a stern warning, the epistolary equivalent of being hauled into the principal's office and smacked with a ruler.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 90



NARGEOLET: JOEL SAGET/AP/GETTY IMAGES. LOCHRIDGE & PASSENGERS: ANDY BRONSON/THE HERALD/AR.

Like so many vestiges of imperial pasts, the great country houses of England are having a reckoning. *James Reginato* reports from the echoey drawing rooms and boxwood mazes on how the baronets, earls, and countesses are grappling with history



John Lubbock started building Harewood House in 1759, using a fortune made on sugar plantations where he enslaved people.

ESTATE *of* PLAY





ONCE YOU'RE 200 or so miles north of London, everything seems to be bigger and bolder, including the country houses. This is Yorkshire, the Texas of England.

Some of the houses are in fact palaces, with hundreds of rooms and thousands of acres, such as Castle Howard, the baroque extravaganza on which young aristocrat Charles Howard started construction in 1701, and Harewood House, a Palladian masterpiece begun by landowner Edwin Lascelles in 1759. Just slightly less grand is Sledmere, an immense Georgian house, where merchant Richard Sykes laid the first stone in 1751. Though portions of these properties are open to the public, a number of their descendants still call these unfathomably huge domiciles home.

These aristocratic dynasties have managed to keep the roofs on—and over magnificent collections of art and decoration—in large part thanks to primogeniture, whereby titles and estates pass from father to eldest son; when confronted with “only” a female heir, these establishments traditionally go “sideways,” to the nearest male cousin or nephew. Some of these properties still have legal entailments which mandate this succession.

Fairness to daughters, or younger sons, is the least of it, though. In 2020, Britain's National Trust reported that almost a third of the some 300 historic houses it manages have direct links to colonialism or slavery—a disclosure meant to shed light on the sometimes “hugely

uncomfortable” stories behind the properties. The 115-page report, commissioned amid the unrest of the pandemic and social movements that summer, put scrutiny on estates still in private hands.

What does succession look like in the age of social justice?

Take the case of Lascelles. After the death of his father, Henry, in 1753, Edwin and his brother, Daniel, inherited one of the largest fortunes in England (around 70 million pounds in today's terms), including roughly 8,000 acres in Yorkshire. Edwin wasted no time assembling a dream team of architects, designers, and craftsmen—Robert Adam, John Carr, Capability Brown, Thomas Chippendale among them—to build Harewood. Arguably, Edwin's most astute move was to hire Joshua Reynolds, the preeminent portrait artist of the day. Over 20 years, Reynolds painted highly staged likenesses of numerous family members, projecting the high status to which they aspired.

His efforts must have duly impressed King George III, under whose reign Edwin was created Baron Harewood; subsequently, his heirs were elevated to earldom. In 1922, Henry, the sixth Earl of Harewood, married Princess Mary, the only daughter of King George V. By now, what had been the source of the family fortune had been obscured. The eminent 20th-century historian Nikolaus Pevsner was of the belief, according to one of his books, that Henry Lascelles's wealth came “from the ribbon trade and the collecting of customs in Barbados.”

In fact, Henry Lascelles—who died by suicide—had been among the largest plantation owners and enslavers in the West Indies. Fast-forward to today's heir of Harewood: David Lascelles, 72, the eighth Earl of Harewood, who grew up unaware of this history. “It wasn't something my father ever talked about,” he said recently in a sitting room at Harewood, next to his wife of 33 years, Diane Howse, Countess of Harewood.

Most of the Lascelles family's West Indian papers were housed in the London offices of their onetime partners and

destroyed in a World War II bombing raid, recounts the earl. But in 1998, in a basement at Harewood, he discovered metal boxes full of documents—including ship manifests and deeds of plantations—that made plain his family's past as enslavers.

“It was a catalyst—a turning point,” he recalls. “I said, ‘We've got to find out more about this.’”

Reeling, Lascelles leaned into his long-standing interest in Buddhism, which he believes helps people see things as they truly are. He traveled to Bhutan, visiting various stupas in the Himalayas. The religious monuments are often built with the intention of calming turbulent forces and bringing harmony to their environment. If he built a stupa at Harewood, Lascelles wondered, could it have a similar effect?

He brought a master stupa builder and three monks from Bhutan to Harewood. None of them spoke English; they had never traveled by plane before. The crew spent four months at the estate, building a stupa with a team of Yorkshire craftsmen, using stone from the estate. In May 2005, the monument was consecrated in a ceremony attended by a cross section of the local community, plus Prince Charles. (Lascelles's godmother and first cousin once removed was Queen Elizabeth.)

As 2007 approached—the bicentennial of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act—the earl and countess went into action. The documents discovered in 1998 were conserved, digitized, and made available online. Members of the African Caribbean population in nearby Leeds—who had rarely visited Harewood before “because they knew the history,” according to Lascelles—were invited to participate in performances, educational workshops, exhibitions, and other programs. The Earl and Countess of Harewood emerged as the most vocal country house owners on the subjects of slavery and colonialism—to the discomfit of some of their peers who preferred to keep quiet. “They're the most vociferous people in England,” an acquaintance said of the couple.

In 1998, in a basement at HAREWOOD, he discovered metal boxes full of documents that made plain his FAMILY'S PAST AS ENSLAVERS. “It was a catalyst—a turning point,” he recalls.



"It's something so many people are terrified about," says the earl. "Our feeling is, just keep talking about it."

The walls of Harewood—adorned also with outstanding portraits by Old Masters, including Titian and El Greco—look different now too. The collection was "fantastic," Howse says, but "it struck me they were all of wealthy white men," the countess adds. "Suddenly, it seemed obvious we needed to do something to adjust that."

Currently, a special exhibition, "Reframing Reynolds," is examining those family pictures. As part of it, Edwin's portrait has been taken down from its customary pride of place high above the mantel in the ornate Cinnamon Drawing Room and stripped of its regal gilded frame. The life-size bare canvas now is mounted directly onto a plain backdrop at eye level; labels highlight the various techniques Reynolds employed to construct a picture of wealth, status, and power. "We wanted to take a little of that power away from Edwin," a curator told me.

Another program, "Missing Portraits," is commissioning new artworks: portraits of people of African Caribbean heritage who have connections to Harewood.

Leeds-based photographer and filmmaker Ashley Karrell executed the first portrait, of Nevis-born Arthur France, a longtime community organizer in Leeds.

1. Harewood's Old Library. **2.** Edwin Lascelles, the first Baron Harewood. **3.** British actor David Harewood met with David Lascelles, whose ancestors enslaved Harewood's.

ROOM: CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES/TRUNK ARCHIVE. HAREWOOD AND LASCELLES MEETING: ANDREW WHITTON. PAINTING: SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS. PORTRAIT OF EDWIN LASCELLES (1713-1793), FIRST BARON HAREWOOD. PREVIOUS SPREAD: RUSSELL WEBB/SHUTTERSTOCK.





1. Castle Howard, begun by the third Earl of Carlisle in 1701. 2. The Long Gallery, which marked Castle Howard's completion in the 1800s. 3. Joshua Reynolds's painting *Portrait of Mai (Omai)*. 4. Gilded plinths designed by William Kent.

His likeness now hangs in the Cinnamon Drawing Room adjacent to Edwin's.

In September, a portrait of actor David Harewood (best known for his role in *Homeland*) will be unveiled.

Born in Birmingham to immigrants from Barbados, Harewood had visited Harewood in his youth. He thought it was a coincidence that he shared a name with the estate. A few years ago, through a genealogist in Barbados, he learned the truth: His paternal great-great-great-grandparents had been enslaved at a Lascelles plantation. In 2019, Harewood journeyed back to the estate. "The opulence, the grandeur. It's like a monument to white supremacy," he said as he arrived, in a documentary that recorded the event, *1000 Years a Slave*.

"Do you feel any guilt or shame?" Harewood asked Lascelles.

"Not in a personal way," Lascelles replied. "I don't feel that feeling guilty

for something that you have no involvement with is a helpful emotion. I think you need to take responsibility for your own actions. But in this, I don't feel responsible—but I feel accountable.... There's nothing you can do to change the past...but you can be active in the present."

Though Harewood said that visit "left me feeling pretty wasted," he will return to the estate this fall for the unveiling of his portrait, which will be accompanied by an exhibition exploring his life.

What will Harewood look like when Lascelles's time is over? The earl has four children with his first wife, Margaret; the elder two, Emily and Benjamin, were born before the couple married in 1979 (they divorced in 1989). Thus, Benjamin is ineligible to inherit the family title. Lascelles's second son, Alexander, born in 1980, is destined to become the ninth Earl of Harewood.

"I think it's nonsense," remarks the earl about primogeniture. "[But] family continuity in places like this is of great value."

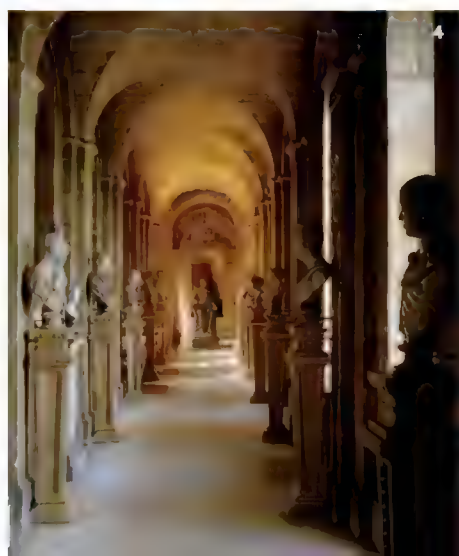
"Ben doesn't inherit the title," he confirms, then makes a distinction: "There's the title and then there's the job—and they aren't necessarily the same. In my case, the two go together."



UNLIKE THE LASCELLESSES, who reached the peerage only after their country seat was completed, the Howards ranked long before Charles Howard, the third Earl of Carlisle, broke ground on Castle Howard in 1701. His grandfather was created first Earl of Carlisle by King Charles II in 1661.

Howard was just 23 when he inherited his title and 10,000 acres, where a fire had just gutted Henderskelfe Castle, which was on the site of Castle Howard

CASTLE HOWARD: JONATHAN WEBB/WEBBARTON; PAINTING: SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS; GILDED PLINTHS: WILLIAM KENT; LONG GALLERY: JONATHAN WEBB/WEBBARTON; SYKES/REINK ARCHIVE; GALLERY: DAVID LYONS/JALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



in 1697. He seized the opportunity to create one of the first great British houses of the 18th century. For its design, he turned, curiously, to a playwright, his friend John Vanbrugh, who then recruited Nicholas Hawksmoor, the leading architect of the day, as a collaborator. Their plan was so ambitious it took more than 100 years to complete, spanning the lifetimes of three earls. Along with the house, several monumental outbuildings were constructed. The massive mausoleum, built in the form of a round colonnaded Roman temple, looms large on the grounds.

"Every day, I see my final resting place," the Honorable Nicholas Paul Geoffrey Howard, 71, told me over a delicious lunch of seared salmon and a nice white Burgundy in Castle Howard's family dining room. Though Nick, as he's called, was born and brought up here, he and his wife, Victoria Barnsley, only took over the reins in 2014, when she stepped down from her position as CEO and publisher of HarperCollins UK and International.

To Nick, it's comforting to know that he will one day be among the seventh generation of Howards to be entombed here. Howard brides, he allows, haven't always been as eager to spend eternity in this forbidding crypt. When he was a child, his mother was dead set against it, he remembers. (She was "far grander" than the Howards, being a daughter of the eighth Duke of Grafton, Nick adds.)

"But about 10 years before she died, she changed her mind," he says. Castle Howard won her over.

"Do you want to be buried in it?" he asks his wife across the table. "I'm still thinking about it," she replies briskly.

Genealogical note: The earldom and Castle Howard were split following the death of the ninth Earl of Carlisle in 1911. His firstborn son inherited the title and the family's other vast and even more ancient castle, Naworth, in Cumbria. Castle Howard was passed to the sixth of the ninth earl's 11 children, Geoffrey, when the earl's sister, Lady Mary Howard, declined it.

When Geoffrey died two decades later, the estate passed to his eldest son,

George—Nick's father. George had little time to enjoy it. In 1940, a fire gutted much of the castle. Over the next decades, George led heroic efforts to restore it. A pillar of the British establishment (he served as chairman of the BBC), George put ownership of the estate into a company in which family members are among the directors. "A great, revolutionary thing," as Barnsley describes it.

Revolutions are never easy. Over the next 30 years, as Simon Howard, Nick's younger brother, ran the estate, things grew increasingly strained. Around 2000, Simon left his first wife to marry Marks & Spencer heiress Rebecca Sieff. Some of Castle Howard's most important works of art were sold, reportedly to finance the divorce. A Michelangelo sketch went for \$8 million, an Il Guercino for more than \$2 million, and Joshua Reynolds's *Portrait of Mai* for \$14.6 million.

Since leaving Yorkshire, *Mai* has been much in the news. Its subject, the second Polynesian to visit Britain, arrived in London in 1774. With intelligence, charm, and dignity, Mai became a celebrated figure. George III received him; Reynolds painted him in his studio—and kept the portrait. After the artist's death in 1792, the fifth Earl of Carlisle bought and hung it at Castle Howard, where it remained until 2001.

The buyer, Irish businessman John Magnier, eventually considered selling it, but by then it was recognized as one of the greatest masterpieces of British art, as well as one of the most important early portraits of a person of color and member of a tribal society in British art history. The British government placed export bans on the painting while various UK cultural institutions sought to raise the 50 million pounds needed to purchase it. Finally, in April, London's National Portrait Gallery and the Getty Foundation jointly agreed to pay the asking price—citing "the myriad artistic, historical, and cultural issues that *Mai*'s portrait raises for 21st century viewers." *Mai* has been the star attraction of the NPG since it reopened after a major renovation. The portrait, since renamed *Portrait of Mai (Omai)*, is set to

"Do you want to be BURIED at CASTLE HOWARD?" he asks his wife across the table. "I'm still thinking about it," she replies briskly.

be displayed at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles for the first time in 2026.

But returning to the main narrative: Late in 2014, amid reports of significant deficits, Simon was asked to resign from the company board. Along with Sieff and their twins, he relocated from the castle to a manor house nearby. In 2021, a “finding of fact trial” found Simon guilty of abusing a six-year-old girl in the 1980s and of the attempted rape of a woman who was an overnight guest at the castle decades ago. In 2021, York Crown Court declared he was unfit to face a criminal trial due to a brain injury caused by a fall the previous year. A diabetic and epileptic, he died in 2022 after a hospital gave him an incorrect dosage of insulin.

As Nick and Barnsley assumed charge at Castle Howard, it was left to them to contend with the mounting financial pressures. Unlike some other comparable dynasties, the Howards don’t own a big swath of London real estate. A sizable part of Castle Howard’s income—double-digit millions of pounds—comes from tourist visits in normal years. With COVID lockdowns, that revenue cratered, even as they faced a 3-million-pound shortfall (met by a combination of government support through the furlough scheme and a very timely filming contract with NBC) and a projection that they will need to spend around 70 million pounds in the years ahead for capital repairs (about 20 million for the mausoleum alone). Some necessary redecoration projects in the east wing are already underway, overseen by bright young American interior decorator Remy Renzullo.

Over the years, various film productions—*Brideshead Revisited* and *Bridgerton*, most notably—have brought in much-needed cash. But when producers of the latter called, the family was skeptical. “I knew the books, because they had been published by HarperCollins,” says Barnsley. “This wasn’t Evelyn Waugh, put it that way.”

But she’s been won over by the TV adaptation with its historically diverse cast. “After all those rather tired BBC period dramas, it was witty and fun.” Still, some people are “terribly snobby” about the production, she says, alluding to Castle Howard’s curators.

During the two-week shoot, those staffers had to be on set at all times—even during the many “rumpy-pumpy scenes,” as Nick calls them—to ensure

that no priceless artifacts were harmed. They nixed a copulation scene on top of an ancient Pompeii mosaic-topped table, for example. Much of “the action” was shot in the Archbishop’s Bedroom—quite a change of pace from *Brideshead*, where Laurence Olivier’s Lord Marchmain died in the elaborate four-poster there, Nick notes.

As executive chairwoman, Barnsley is running the show at Castle Howard, certainly from the financial side. In view of the situation, her executive experience couldn’t be more useful, it seems. But it’s been an adjustment for some.

“Nobody called it a business before. Everybody who worked here called it an estate,” she says. “It’s a mindset we’ve slowly tried to overcome. But we try to do it gently. We have people here whose families have worked on the estate three or four generations.”

When Nick and Barnsley’s time ends, a new system to choose future custodians will be introduced. Anybody who’s interested can apply, much like any other job. Whoever is best qualified will be selected by the directors of Castle Howard Estate Limited (the board of which is composed of five family members and two outsiders) and serve for a 10-year term. Oh, and applicants don’t necessarily have to be Howards. (In the running presumably would be George, 38, Nick’s son from his previous marriage, and Blanche, 28, Nick and Barnsley’s daughter, as well as members of the extended family.)

“There’s got to be a Howard at Castle Howard!” one traditionalist, who owns another of Yorkshire’s ancient estates, exclaimed during a dinner party there. While Nick gently made the point that “the genius” of one generation is not necessarily transmitted to the next, “the people of Yorkshire want a Howard in Castle Howard,” the traditionalist claimed.

People want to see the estate survive, Barnsley countered, and it doesn’t matter if they’re called Howard or Smith.

SOME MIGHT ARGUE that Sledmere, as the seat of mere baronets, hardly qualifies as a great house,” posits Christopher Simon Sykes, 75, a great-great-great-great-great-grand-nephew of Richard Sykes, builder of the aforementioned estate.

The gray stone exterior of the house is fairly austere. But once inside, there’s nothing plain—or small—about it, and it sits on just under 9,000 acres.

When Christopher was growing up here in the 1950s and ’60s with his brothers, Tatton, Jeremy, and Nicholas, and sisters, Arabella and Henrietta, the house was still run by their parents on an

1. Sledmere, built by Richard Sykes in 1751.
2. Plum Sykes in custom Alexander McQueen for her 2005 wedding at Sledmere. 3. The Turkish Room, a replica of one of the sultan’s apartments in the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, designed for the sixth baronet, Sir Mark Sykes.



PLUM SYKES: JONATHAN BECKER; BLUE ROOM: CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES/TRUNK ARCHIVE. SLEDMERE: SLEDMERE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

Edwardian scale. Mr. Clarke, the chauffeur, and Mr. Potter, the groom, resided in the village. According to accounts, the rest of the household staff lived in: Pennington, the butler (never Mr.); Mrs. Wignall, the cook; two footmen; a pantry boy; a pantry maid; two scullery maids; the housekeeper; the nanny; a nursemaid; a French governess; and his father's secretary.

Ancestor Richard, who created the family fortune in trade, died childless in 1761. The estate then passed to his younger brother, Mark, the first Baronet Sykes. From him, six generations of Sledmere owners descend—a colorful line of sportsmen, connoisseurs, politicians, socialites, writers, artists, and eccentrics.



In 1978, Tatton inherited the estate as well as the title, becoming the eighth Baronet Sykes. He made the house even more impressive. One of his first acts was to replace the gold paint in the 120-foot-long library with gold leaf.

"Who is this unbelievably glamorous person?" Plum Sykes remembers thinking about Tatton the first time she met him, when she was a small girl. "At breakfast, he was wearing pink-tinted sunglasses and his mother's diamond brooch on the lapel of his velvet smoking jacket," adds the *Vogue* contributor and novelist, whose father, Mark, was first cousins with Tatton and his siblings.

"He had impeccable taste and was absolutely devoted to the house. He wanted it to be alive and full of people. But he didn't have just toffs staying. He had intellectuals, scientists, artists," she remembers.

She also vividly recalls Tatton's forays to the city: "He would drive to London in his gold Cadillac, wearing cowboy boots."

"He lived his gay life in London, but not in Yorkshire," Christopher recalls. "My parents could never accept it. They were of a different generation. So, he had a very difficult time."

In recent years, Tatton's gregarious personality has been much diminished by Alzheimer's. As his 80th birthday approaches, Sledmere's future is uncertain. Christopher is the only one of the four boys in the family who had children. One of them is a son. (Christopher's two sisters have three boys and two girls

between them, but the title "would all be through the male line," he notes.)

So, crisis averted? Succession assured? It seems not.

"He's told us definitively that he doesn't want it," Christopher recounts, referring to his son, Joseph, a 32-year-old Londoner.

Shocking as it may be to *Downton Abbey* fans, not everybody longs to inherit an absolutely fabulous and enormous ancestral seat. Joe is "very left-leaning," explains his father. Apparently, country house ownership doesn't align with his politics or his professional life. He's a successful podcast executive and producer.

Where does this leave Sledmere?

"People are constantly asking me, what's going to happen next?" says Christopher. "I don't know, and we won't know until my brother passes to the next world. Until then...we're in limbo."

Unfortunately for Joe, he "can't avoid being the next baronet—he's stuck with the title," says Christopher.

One extended family member expresses hope that Joe might eventually move in, however: "I am praying that Joe will change his mind," says Plum. Based on her observations at a recent family reunion at the house, she thinks there could be a chance. "He seemed to be having a whale of a time," she recalls.

Meanwhile, Sledmere carries on in high style. Tatton's siblings host large house parties several times a year. Over coronation weekend, for example, Christopher invited 16 to stay, including Plum and her daughter, Tess, and his goddaughter, Catherine FitzGerald, who came with her husband, Dominic West, and their four children. West, who recently played King Charles in his later prince era on *The Crown*, handed out the prizes in a crown-making contest.

"It was the most wonderful weekend," says Plum. "There were huge breakfasts. We all watched the coronation on telly with Champagne. Then the most amazing tea was laid out in the Music Room.... Such giggles. This is a house that makes you feel like you've got to have a glass of Champagne, be in black tie. But it feels so comfortable and loose." Yet, like the other custodians of these Yorkshire estates, members of the Sykes family are keenly aware that an ancestral home needs to move with the times if it is to survive.

As the Earl of Harewood put it, "We're not here to make sure everything looks the same as when we arrived." ■



FUTURE URGE

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MAY BE HUMANITY'S MOST INGENUOUS INVENTION,
UNLOCKING NOVEL FORMS OF CREATIVITY, ART, AND MEDICINE.
DEPENDING ON WHOM YOU ASK, IT MIGHT ALSO WIPE OUT ALL MANKIND

THE SENSE

BY
NICK BILTON

ILLUSTRATION
BY GRACE
ALDRICH



WE INVENTED WHEELS AND COMPASSES AND CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DOUGH ICE CREAM AND THE EAMES LOUNGE CHAIR AND PENICILLIN AND $E = MC^2$ AND BEER

that comes in six-packs and guns and dildos and the Pet Rock and Doggles (eyewear for dogs) and square watermelons. “One small step for man.” We came up with the Lindy Hop and musical toothbrushes and mustard gas and glow-in-the-dark Band-Aids and paper and the microscope and bacon—fucking bacon!—and Christmas. “Ma-ma-se, ma-ma-sa, ma-ma-ko-ssa.” We went to the bottom of the ocean and into orbit. We sucked energy from the sun and fertilizer from the air. “Let there be light.” We created the most amazing pink flamingo lawn ornaments that come in packs of two and only cost \$9.99!

In a universe that stretches an estimated 93 billion light-years in diameter with 700 quintillion (7 followed by 20 zeros) planets—here, on this tiny little blue dot we call Earth, one of us created a tool called a spork. The most astounding part is that while that same universe is an estimated 26.7 billion years old, we did everything in just under 6,000 years.

All of this in less than 200 generations of human life.

Now we’ve just created a new machine that is made of billions of microscopic transistors and aluminum and copper wires that zigzag and twist and turn and are interconnected in incomprehensible ways. A machine that is only a few centimeters in width and length.

A little tiny machine that may end up being the last invention humans ever create.

This all stems from an idea conceptualized in the 1940s and finally figured out a few years ago. That could solve all of the world’s problems or destroy every single human on the planet in the snap of a finger—or both. Machines that will potentially answer all of our unanswerable questions: Are we alone in the universe? What is consciousness? Why are we here? Thinking machines that could cure cancer and allow us to live until we’re 150 years old. Maybe even 200. Machines that, some estimate, could take over up to 30 percent of all jobs within the next decade, from stock traders to truck drivers to accountants and telemarketers, lawyers, bookkeepers, and all things creative: actors, writers, musicians, painters. Something that will go to war *for* us—and likely against us.

Artificial intelligence.

Thinking machines that are being built in a 50-square-mile speck of dirt we call Silicon Valley by a few hundred men (and a

handful of women) who write in a language only they and computers can speak. And whether we understand what it is they are doing or not, we are largely left to the whims of their creation. We don’t have a say in the ethics behind their invention. We don’t have a say over whether it should even exist in the first place. “We’re creating God,” one AI engineer working on large language models (LLMs) recently told me. “We’re creating conscious machines.”

A

READY, WE’VE SEEN creative AIs that can paint and draw in any style imaginable in mere seconds. LLMs can write stories in the style of Ernest Hemingway or Bugs Bunny or the King James Bible while you’re drunk with peanut butter stuck in your mouth. Plat-

forms that can construct haikus or help finish a novel or write a screenplay. We’ve got customizable porn, where you can pick a woman’s breast size or sexual position in any setting—including with you. There’s voice AI software that can take just a few seconds of anyone’s voice and completely re-create an almost indistinguishable replica of them saying something new. There’s AI that can re-create music by your favorite musician. Don’t believe me? Go and listen to “Not” Johnny Cash singing “Barbie Girl,” Freddie Mercury intoning “Thriller,” or Frank Sinatra bellowing “Livin’ on a Prayer” to see just how terrifying all of this is.

Then there’s the new drug discovery. People using AI therapists instead of humans. Others are uploading voicemails from loved ones who have died so they can continue to interact with them by talking to an AI replica of a dead parent or child. There are AI dating apps (yes, you date an AI partner). It’s being used for misinformation in politics already, creating deepfake videos and fake audio recordings. The US military is exploring using AI in warfare—and could eventually create autonomous killer robots. (Nothing to worry about here!) People are discussing using AI to create entirely new species of animals (yes, that’s real) or viruses (also real). Or exploring human characteristics, such as creating a breed of super soldiers who are stronger and have less empathy, all through AI-based genetic engineering.

And we've adopted all of these technologies with staggering speed—most of which have been realized in just under six months.

"It excites me and worries me in equal proportions. The upsides for this are enormous, maybe these systems find cures for diseases, and solutions to problems like poverty and climate change, and those are enormous upsides," said David Chalmers, a professor of philosophy and neural science at NYU. "The downsides are humans that are displaced from leading the way, or in the worst case, extinguished entirely, [which] is terrifying." As one highly researched economist report circulated last month noted, "There is a more than 50-50 chance AI will wipe out all of humanity by the middle of the century." Max Tegmark, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, predicts a 50 percent chance of demise within the next 100 years. Others don't put our chances so low. In July, a group of researchers, including experts in nuclear war, bioweapons, AI, and extinction, and a group of "superforecasters"—general-purpose prognosticators—did their own math. The "experts" deduced that there was a 20 percent chance of a catastrophe by 2100 and a 6 percent chance of an extinction-like event from AI, while the superforecasters had a more positive augury of a 9 percent chance of catastrophe and only 1 percent chance we'd be wiped off the planet.

It feels a little like picking the extinction lottery numbers—and even with a 1 percent chance, perhaps we should be asking ourselves if this new invention is worth the risk. Yet the question circulating around Silicon Valley isn't if such a scenario is worth it, even with a 1 percent chance of annihilation, but rather, if it is really such a bad thing if we build a machine that changes human life as we know it.

LARRY PAGE IS not an intimidating-looking man. When he speaks, his voice is so soft and raspy from a vocal cord injury, it sounds like a campfire that is trying to tell you something. The last time I shook his hand, many, many years ago, it felt as soft as a bar of soap. While his industry peers, like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, are often performing public somersaults with pom-poms for attention, Page, who cofounded Google and is on the board of Alphabet, hasn't done a single public interview since 2015, when he was onstage at a conference. In 2018, when Page was called before the Senate Intelligence Committee to address Russian election meddling, online privacy, and political bias on tech platforms, his chair sat empty as senators grilled his counterparts.

While Page stays out of the limelight, he still enjoys attending dinners and waxing poetic about technology and philosophy. A few years ago a friend found himself seated next to Page at one such dinner, and he relayed a story to me: Page was talking about the progression of technology and how it was inevitable that humans would eventually create "superintelligent machines," also known as artificial general intelligence (AGI), which are computers that are smarter than humans, and in Page's view, once that happened, those machines would quickly find no use for us humans, and they would simply get rid of us.

"What do you mean, get rid of us?" my friend asked Page.

Like a sci-fi writer delivering a pitch for their new apocalyptic story idea, Page explained that these robots would become far superior to us very quickly, and if we were no longer needed on

earth and that's the natural order of things—and I quote—"it's just the next step in evolution." At first my friend assumed Page was joking. "I'm serious," said Page. When my friend argued that this was a really fucked up way of thinking about the world, Page grew annoyed and accused him of being "specist."

Over the years, I've heard a few other people relay stories like this about Page. While being interviewed on Fox News earlier this year, Musk was one of them. He explained that he used to be close with Page but they no longer talked after a debate in which Page called Musk "specist" too. "My perception was that Larry was not taking AI safety seriously enough," Musk said. "He really seems to want digital superintelligence, basically digital God, if you will, as soon as possible."

Let's just stop for a moment and unpack this. Larry Page...the founder of one of the world's biggest companies...a company that employs thousands of engineers that are building artificial intelligence machines right now, as you read this...believes that AI will, *and should*, become so smart and so powerful and so formidable and...and...that one day it won't need us dumb pathetic little humans anymore...and it will, *and it should*, GET RID OF US!

"If Larry Page said, 'I'm going to obliterate the planet with a nuke and nuking the entire planet is just the natural order of things and so we shouldn't mourn it,' we would all say, 'What the fuck, that's a terrible idea!'" said Nate Soares, executive director of the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, a nonprofit focused on identifying and managing potential existential risks from AGI. (Page did not respond to a request for comment for this article.)

"All of the people leading the development of AI right now are completely disingenuous in public," a political lobbying consultant told me. "They are all just in a race to be the first to build AGI and are either oblivious to the consequences of what could go wrong or they just don't care." This is evident by the fact that a large swath of Silicon Valley has now shifted to the goal of creating superintelligent machines.

A lot of the people I spoke to for this story, including AI philosophers, US senators, and business leaders, worry that the guardrails around AI, such as they are, could fall quicker than we will have time to realize. Some predict it will be near-term catastrophic. "I think there's a good chance my friends' kids will never grow up," Soares said. "If I had a child today, I wouldn't expect to see their eighth birthday." In other words, in Soares's view, no one will be around on earth within the next decade.

Soares might sound hyperbolic, and indeed other experts, like Kevin Kelly, one of the founders of *Wired* magazine, argues that the probability of human extinction is incredibly low, and such a scenario (if possible) is very far away. But even if there is a 1 percent chance that Soares's dark reality is possible, is it worth us plowing forward with such speed?

WHILE THE SQUARE watermelon and the spork should go down in the history of the universe as perhaps among our most creative inventions—let's not forget Doggles, either—humans' most impactful creations, are, in fact, our stories.

Incredible and terrifying and beautiful stories that we imagined and then told. Some about good and evil, others about wizards and goblins, nice little green men and evil stepsisters. About the

Buendía family and another set in Middle-earth and then a story about a young scientist who creates a sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment. “I said a hip, hop, the hippie, the hippie, to the hip-hip-hop...” Our stories are told in words and music and art of all kinds. We didn’t just invent the piano, we used it to compose Nocturne in E-flat Major, Op. 9, No. 2. We made art like *The Last Supper*, *The Thinker*, Duchamp’s urinal (I guess you can call that art). And then...ACTION! *The Godfather*, *Do the Right Thing*, *The Great British Bake Off*, and more recently, a real human innovation, *MILF Manor*.

And we did all that in just a few hundred years. But the leaders in Silicon Valley seem to think it’s time that we should outsource all of that time and thinking to their AIs. “There are really deep

For some, it’s already too late. Reddit is littered with posts by people who have seen their writing jobs as copywriters or marketers handed over to an AI. “Lost my main client to fucking ChatGPT,” a freelance writer posted earlier this year. “I need to retrain for a new career.” (Which career you can retrain for that won’t be taken by AI is still up for debate—so far all I’ve come up with is plumber, elder care, and AI prompt writer.) While some in developing countries are quickly going to be out of work, there is a scenario where people in India and the Philippines pick up that lone prompt writing job and use AI to write stories and illustrate. Google has already started pitching *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* on its new AI tool for producing news stories. People who made a living doing

“All of the people LEADING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AI right now are COMPLETELY DISINGENUOUS in public.”

spiritual questions at hand here. I don’t think policymakers should be shy about talking about that,” Senator Chris Murphy told me. “When you start to outsource the bulk of human creativity to machines, there comes with that a human rot.” Murphy has been one of the most outspoken senators about AI, regularly writing about his concerns, and he is on numerous subcommittees that are probing how AI will affect society. He noted that by his estimations, humans starting to be replaced for creativity by computers will happen at a staggering scale within the next two to three years, and it scares the hell out of him. “If we stop existing in the way we exist today and transfer all of our functions to machines, that becomes a pretty empty existence.”

The AI promoters out there say that their products are only going to make us more creative. “The creative arts will enter a golden age, as AI-augmented artists, musicians, writers, and filmmakers gain the ability to realize their visions far faster and at greater scale than ever before,” billionaire venture capitalist Marc Andreessen recently wrote in a 7,000-word screed about all the ways AI will make life better (ironically, he didn’t mention that it will also make him richer, given that his venture firm has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in AI companies, including OpenAI, Ambient.ai, and Character.ai). The AI dreamers, like Andreessen, argue that the upcoming AI revolution will mirror the Industrial Revolution, destroying some jobs but creating new, superior ones. (“AI prompt engineer” has become an in-demand job of late.)

Indeed, the Industrial Revolution fostered great productivity and economic growth, introduced novel industries, improved living standards, and alleviated hunger. However, it also caused appalling working conditions, including child labor, and increased pollution, resulting in health issues and climate change. Wealth disparity and social unrest surged. The global population has grown eightfold since that period, indicating a significantly higher disruption potential. Most importantly, the Industrial Revolution took place over around 80 years; the AI revolution will occur in two or three.

voiceover for books, TV, and podcasts are already seeing their art form replaced by a slew of AI start-ups. And budding artists who were setting off for art school to study painting, illustration, and graphic design are rethinking what to do with their futures.

“We shouldn’t be okay with machines taking over our creativity,” said Paul Kedrosky, an investor and economics researcher who is the cofounder of SK Ventures, which invests in AI and tech. “Language and creativity are the substrate of society, and we shouldn’t be giving up control to machines, even if we can. That’s what makes society rewarding and valuable.” Kedrosky isn’t completely anti-AI; he believes that we should build things that help “humans flourish rather than making humans redundant,” and he invests in those kinds of AI products accordingly. Kedrosky and Murphy (and plenty of others I’ve spoken to) argue that just because we can doesn’t mean we should—especially when it comes to something as fundamental as creativity. They argue that we need to regulate these machines as quickly as possible.

While the Andreessens of the tech world think regulation will hamper innovation, Murphy and a slew of other congresspeople are hoping to start an entirely new regulatory body, like the creation of what became the FCC after the radio was invented, or the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to regulate nuclear energy, and countless other agencies that have come along with the advent of new inventions. “Technology is not a force of nature, it’s not a universal feature,” Kedrosky said. “To say that it’s not our responsibility to stop it is just a nihilistic abdication of responsibility.”

In 1965 the statistician I.J. Good, when envisioning what the world would look like once we created ultraintelligent machines, said that the second machines became smarter than people, there would “unquestionably be an intelligence explosion” as machines quickly created smarter machines, and that “the intelligence of man would be left far behind.” We’d likely understand what they were doing in the same way our pets understand the words of a book we read aloud. “Thus,” Good wrote, “the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make.”

IN 2017, AN obscure but groundbreaking paper titled “Attention Is All You Need” was presented at the Neural Information Processing Systems conference in Long Beach, California. But few people in the audience knew that the paper, written by a small group of Google engineers, was set to change everything in artificial intelligence. Illia Polosukhin, a Ukrainian-born engineer who worked on the research and is named in the paper, explained to me that the breakthrough was to start thinking about AI as a “transformer” (a term borrowed from the movie *Transformers*), where machines act more like the human brain, and less like computers, to generate human-like text or make predictions. “The first time we tried it, it was not bad. It worked surprisingly well. It was like seeing the first sign of life,” Polosukhin told me. “While it was primitive, it was really powerful.”

Over the next few years, AI start-ups skyrocketed. “We’re seeing more AI-related products and advancements in a single day than we saw in a single year a decade ago,” a Silicon Valley product manager told me. “It’s almost impossible to keep up.” There are now more than 14,700 AI start-ups in the United States alone (and an estimated 58,000 worldwide). And the top AI companies are raising \$3 billion a month in funding, per investment tracker Crunchbase. Last year, AI revenue accounted for \$51.27 billion of the global economy. Eight years from now (if we survive that long) PwC predicts AI will account for \$15.7 trillion of the global economy—more than three times Japan’s entire GDP.

As a result of the unbelievable financial upside, almost everyone in tech is now clamoring to work in the field. San Francisco’s Hayes Valley has been dubbed Cerebral Valley, as it is now home to dozens of commune-like AI hacker houses. One of these, called HFO, is an estimated \$16 million mansion off Alamo Square where the founder, Dave Fontenot, provides

said that most of her top C-suite jobs are filled with women, but that is far from the norm at AI companies in the Valley. She worries that the male-centric view from these men—often young men—will have far-reaching implications for society in the long run, including vastly biased models. “The tech bros’ response is that humans are biased, and so should AI,” Habib said to me. Worse, Habib noted, they all preach the same old Silicon Valley trope that they’re working in this space to make the world a better place, but at the end of the day, it’s all about the money. “You look around AI today and everyone is a generative AI capitalist,” Habib told me. “The way they sell, what they build, their vision for the future, is that it’s all about money.”

While Murphy isn’t in the Valley, from what he’s seen, he couldn’t agree more. “I think there will be a monster amount of money behind AI, everyone in Silicon Valley is going to try to build it as quickly as possible, not do what is necessarily safe for humanity,” he said. Nowhere does that thesis ring truer than the Pioneer Building in San Francisco, home of OpenAI.

SAM ALTMAN IS a god. An AI messiah. He’s fawned over in news articles. Doted on in interviews. This spring, Altman traveled around the world meeting with the presidents, prime ministers, and chancellors of more than two dozen countries on six continents, including France, England, Nigeria, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Singapore, and Indonesia, to preach the benefits of AI, most specifically the company he helms, OpenAI.

But Altman wasn’t always adored this way. A decade ago, for example, when people could earn badges on the app Foursquare (like the “bender” badge, for going out four nights in a row), the “douchebag” badge was an ode to Altman, colored pink and green to match the pink and green polo shirts (yes, two at

The QUESTION CIRCULATING around Silicon Valley isn’t if such a scenario is worth it, even with a 1 PERCENT CHANCE OF ANNIHILATION, but rather, if it is really such a bad thing if we build a machine that CHANGES HUMAN LIFE AS WE KNOW IT.

housing, food, laundry, and \$500,000 in funding in exchange for a 2.5 percent ownership fee of whatever is created there.

One of the major worries with these collectives, and with AI development in general, is that it is following the path of almost all previous technology development. In other words, it’s mostly tech bros working in this arena and very few women.

“It’s fucking maddening,” said May Habib, who, as the cofounder and CEO of Writer—an AI start-up that helps people at companies write with the same style and voice—is one of the exceptions. “There are no women in AI.” Habib, who moved to Canada in the 1990s as part of a Lebanese refugee program,

the same time) Altman wore onstage at an Apple conference. For years on Twitter, his advice read like a fortune cookie from Panda Express—“the real risk in life is regret”—proclamations that were often passed around between tech execs with perplexity and the rolling-eyes emoji. When he recently posted a picture of himself surrounded by throngs of people taking photos of him, gazing rapturously, on the OpenAI website, one Valley insider said, “He looks like he thinks he’s Gandhi.”

OpenAI has become the red-hot center of the AI arms race, and the company now faces an impossible situation: moving the technology forward to stay ahead CONTINUED ON PAGE 92

NEW DIRECTIONS

NIA DACOSTA, DIRECTOR AND COWRITER OF *THE MARVELS*, IS LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THE BARRIERS SHE'S BROKEN THAN THE WORLDS SHE'LL TAKE ON NEXT

By **REBECCA FORD**

BACK IN EARLY 2020, when Marvel was on the hunt for a director for *The Marvels*, a young director came in to pitch her vision for the project to executives and select talent. Four minutes into the meeting, Brie Larson sent an all-caps text to their mutual friend, Tessa Thompson. All it said was “NIA DACOSTA.”

DaCosta, who was 30 at the time, got the job, becoming not only Marvel's youngest director ever, but also the first Black woman to helm one of its films. “When I go into those rooms, I’m really just like, ‘This is what I want,’” says DaCosta. “I’m not trying to figure out what *they* want, so I don’t have those kinds of nerves.” Her friend Thompson, who knows her way around the Marvel universe, having played Valkyrie in the *Thor* films, doesn’t think DaCosta is giving herself quite enough credit: “She has this combination of real humility and also this idea of ‘Why *shouldn’t* I be able to do these things?’ That belief in self—you need that, especially if you’re in a position where people are inclined to underestimate you.”

When she signed on for *The Marvels*, DaCosta had released just one feature, an \$11 million indie that was galaxies away from a superhero blockbuster. Now she would direct the sequel to *Captain Marvel*, which had made more than \$1 billion globally, and her movie would have to be plotted and positioned carefully since it was tethered to the brand’s other IP, both past and future.

“We were just very impressed with her indie cred—and her nerd cred,” says Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige.

Working with Marvel had been a long-held dream for DaCosta, but there would be risks. The studio has tapped some inspired directors over the years: Ryan Coogler, Taika Waititi, Chloé Zhao, to name a few. Still, the Marvel Cinematic Universe isn’t exactly an auteur-driven Eden: The movies and TV shows are so interconnected that Feige sometimes seems more like an army general than a movie executive. DaCosta finished another studio film before she took on *The Marvels*—the horror hit *Candyman*—but she’s a writer-director used to a certain level of autonomy. “That’s where most of the real pure stress as an artist came from,” she tells me from her East London flat, pausing to shush her five-year-old dog, Maude, who’s attempting to attack a pigeon outside her window. “People are like, ‘Oh, it’s a Marvel film. Cool, cool, cool,’ but I also have my name on it, so I want to be able to be proud of it too.”

DIRECTOR'S CHAIR
The filmmaker, photographed in London on July 15.

Clothing by **Bottega Veneta**; earrings by **Bulgari**.



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S DACOSTA ENTERED the MCU, Coogler suggested that she just be herself. Straightforward advice, but DaCosta didn't know what

to make of it initially: "I said, 'Ryan, what are you talking about?'" It seemed unlikely that being herself would be enough given the scope of the task at hand. But DaCosta had been raised to trust her instincts, and she returned to Coogler's words regularly. "You can't do anything but be yourself, so bring that to the table," she says. "They can choose to take some and leave some, but that's what your job is."

DaCosta grew up in Harlem. She was raised by a single mother—a singer whose band's claim to fame was writing the theme song for *Cool Runnings* and who exposed her to film, music, theater, and performance art from an early age. "That was really my upbringing—just full acceptance, full of art, and a mother who really was like, 'The world is your oyster. Go explore it. Have fun,'" she says. DaCosta took her first film class at 16 while in boarding school and wrote a feature-length screenplay even though, technically, her teacher hadn't asked her to. She graduated from New York University, then moved to London to attend the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Her first job in the industry was as a production assistant on reality shows like *Kesha: My Crazy Beautiful Life*, but she was miserable: "I was like, 'This can't be my life.'"

Her mother encouraged her to write, and DaCosta's screenplay *Little Woods* was accepted by the Sundance Labs, which had launched Coogler, Waititi, Paul Thomas Anderson, Lulu Wang, Quentin Tarantino, and more. *Little Woods* came out in 2019, with Thompson and Lily James as cash-strapped sisters who turn to desperate measures to save their home from foreclosure. It was a tense, nuanced debut from a new voice. In short order, DaCosta was hired by producer Jordan Peele to cowrite and direct *Candyman*, a sharp horror sequel about a Chicago artist (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II) who becomes obsessed with the urban legend. The fresh take on horror, told from a Black point of view, earned \$77 million worldwide and made DaCosta the first Black woman with a film that opened at number one. "That one's crazy," she says. She had assumed that another director—maybe one with the last name DuVernay, Prince-Bythewood, or Matsoukas—had already done it. "I thought it was Ava or Gina or Melina. I was really shocked."

Making *Candyman* taught DaCosta how to reframe an existing franchise through her own POV, and Peele proved to be a godsend as a mentor. "One of the most important things I learned from him is how to be fearless and how to navigate studio stuff," she says. "He's not just critically successful, he's incredibly commercially successful as well, and that has its own pressure, obviously. He was really good at holding both those things at once." Marvel encouraged DaCosta to talk to some of their other directors before she went into production on *The Marvels*, so she bounced her most existential fears off people like Zhao, Waititi, and James Gunn. She also asked

"We were just very impressed with her indie cred—and her nerd cred,"

SAYS MARVEL STUDIOS PRESIDENT KEVIN FEIGE.

some friends who were in the universe, "Are they going to kill me and destroy my soul? Is Kevin Feige a bad man?" she jokes. "And they were like, 'No, he's just a good guy who was a nerd.'"

DaCosta was a nerd too, having watched X-Men cartoons and *Sailor Moon* manga on TV when she was young. In *The Marvels*, she focused on the tricky dynamic among the three main characters, Carol Danvers/Captain Marvel (Larson), Monica Rambeau (Teyonah Parris), and Kamala Khan (Iman Vellani), whose light-based powers are enmeshed in surprising, challenging ways. DaCosta is pleased with the multiplicity of places she could put her stamp: not just strengthening the bond between the lead characters, but redesigning costumes, choosing locations, naming fictional planets, and so on. She loved production, she says, but admits there were days when she texted Destin Daniel Cretton, who directed *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings*, things like "I'm overwhelmed" and "I'm so stressed." As she puts it now, "Sometimes you'd be in a scene and you'd be like, 'What the hell does any of this shit mean?'" Or an actor's

looking at some crazy thing happening in space, and they're [actually] looking at a blue X. There were obviously hard days, and days where you're like, 'This just isn't working.'"

Postproduction proved to be most challenging. *The Marvels* shares a bloodline with *Captain Marvel* and the *Ms. Marvel* TV show as well as future films. Feige says he prioritizes individual movies over the grander sweep of the studio's storytelling: "The overarching narrative is secondary to the narrative of the individual film." But DaCosta was fully cognizant that she'd been hired by a powerful entity to do a job. "It is a Kevin Feige production, it's his movie," she says. "So I think you live in that reality, but I tried to go in with the knowledge that some of you is going to take a back seat."

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S SHE AWAITS the release of *The Marvels* in November, DaCosta has decamped from social media. *Captain Marvel*, which was directed by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck, may have been an enormous hit, but it was also one of the few female-fronted films in the studio's universe—and, not coincidentally,

the recipient of sexist vitriol from the darkest corners of the fandom. As for *The Marvels*, it centers on three women, including the first Muslim superhero in one of the studio's movies. "I'm just girding myself for it," DaCosta says. "I am a sensitive soul, and I think maybe more of us are than we want to admit."

DaCosta is also still grappling with the breakthroughs she's made, including the fact that, at \$130 million, *The Marvels* is the highest-budgeted film ever helmed by a Black woman. (DuVernay's *A Wrinkle in Time* previously held that title with

HAIR: MOLECULE SEASAY; MAKEUP: ALEX BAREK; MANICURE: JADA ELIZE LORENZ; TAILOR: MICHELLE WANNER; SET DESIGN: KING OWUSU. PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY BLOCK PRODUCTIONS. FOR DETAILS, GO TO VF.COM/CREDITS.

\$100 million.) On sets, she's noticed that the way she's spoken to, or heard, is different than it would be for someone who doesn't look like her. "Sometimes as a Black woman, you realize that [people think] you take up more space than you actually do, or your voice sounds louder to people than it actually is, or your tone is more stern than it actually is," she says.

Despite having Peele's full support on *Candyman*, DaCosta says that some "ridiculous" things happened on that set, with crew members saying "things that are super inappropriate, that you would just never say to anyone else because they were so specific to my gender, my race, my age." She had a very different experience on *The Marvels*, fortunately, in part because she had the power to hire the people she wanted for her team. "I realized it wasn't ever gonna be about how much power I amassed or how many great movies I made, or if I won awards, it was always just going to be the people that I surrounded myself with," she says. "The thing that I've been most surprised by lately is how much respect I'm getting from these middle-aged white dudes that I work with."

HAVING NAVIGATED the studio system for years now, DaCosta has turned back to smaller universes. When we first spoke, she was just a week from starting production on *Hedda*, running from actor rehearsals in the morning to production meetings in the afternoon. The film is based on DaCosta's own adaptation of Ibsen's classic play *Hedda Gabler*, about a bored woman trapped in an unhappy marriage. She calls the script an "esoteric psychological thriller" and has cast Thompson in the lead role. A few days after our interview, however, the actors union joined the Writers Guild on strike, bringing most scripted productions like *Hedda* to an immediate halt.

DaCosta is also attached to direct an adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates's novel *The Water Dancer*, a surrealist story about an enslaved man who discovers a mysterious power after almost drowning in a river. But she insists that her plan after *Hedda* is to take a break, having worked constantly for eight years. DaCosta



is single—"Know anybody?" she asks me with a laugh—and wouldn't mind staying in London, which she's begun to view as home after living there for back-to-back projects. But taking time off may be a challenge for someone who's never at a loss for inspiration. "She works nonstop and is a fountain of ideas," says Feige. "She would spend time in between setups pitching me other movies and other ideas and other stories, because that's the way her mind works."

Collaborating on a huge IP-driven movie like *The Marvels* has made DaCosta long to write original films again. She's got sci-fi and fantasy stories she's ready to tell, and now she has all the skills she needs. "It was really great to play in this world, and to be a part of building this big world," she says, "but it made me just want to build my own world more." ■

Top by **Burberry**;
earrings by **Bulgari**.
Throughout: hair
products by **Mielle**
Organics; makeup
products by **Dior**;
nail enamel by
Chanel Le Vernis.

The Life

Your **FAVORITE RAPPER'S FAVORITE BILLIONAIRE**

loves nothing more than to have a few hundred of his famous friends over to his Hamptons estate. How did a sports-licensing CEO from Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania, become this generation's Gatsby?

By **DAN ADLER**





of the



Party



MICHAEL RUBIN AND Lil Baby first met in the Bahamas. The CEO and the rapper found themselves, in January 2021, sitting around the same baccarat table with their mutual friends Drake and Meek Mill. Baby had begun making music a few years earlier after serving two years related to drug and weapon charges in Atlanta. Now, like the two other rappers placing their bets, he was beginning to mix with billionaire businessmen.

"We ain't win," Baby recently recalled. "We had a great night, though."

As with Drake and Meek, Rubin, 51, struck up a friendship with the 28-year-old rapper. Each of the three has recorded lyrics about him, but Baby put it the most bluntly on a 2022 song: "I get my advice from Mike Rubin."

"He's got the best story ever," Rubin said, sitting nearby. "Because this guy didn't even rap until he got out of prison, and it shows you, you can do anything at any time in your life."

They were in a Sprinter van on a Tuesday morning in June, heading from a Harlem school to get to Rubin's company jet at LaGuardia. Fanatics, the sports merchandise business (jerseys, cards, more) that Rubin has run since 2011, was holding its inaugural Merch Madness event. In cities including Los Angeles, Miami, and Dallas, a wealth of athletes and musicians including Donovan Mitchell, DJ Khaled, Quavo, and Chris Paul—most of them personal friends of Rubin's—gave out licensed apparel to local kids and families in need. It was an instance of the philanthropic bent Rubin has demonstrated in recent years as well as of the eye-popping and mildly befuddling constellation of

personalities he has assembled around himself over the same period.

Rubin and Baby boarded the plane. Rubin picked up the phone—Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred was calling to ask how he could get involved in the charity event. "You know, we did that in 30 cities," Rubin said to no one in particular on the 10-seat jet. "Next year we're gonna do it even bigger." The day's itinerary had Rubin traveling to Massachusetts, where his close friend, New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, played host for a Merch Madness event, and then on to Philadelphia, where the 76ers, which Rubin partly owned until selling his stake last year, hosted another. As his group navigated a series of helicopter rides, Rubin talked in quick bursts, twitching with enthusiasm over the time they were making and how the weather was holding up.

"I really feel like I've had a profound effect on rappers' timeliness," Rubin reflected.

"Where we going now?" Baby asked in the van.

"Robert's stadium."

A pair of videographers and a photographer tagged along—Baby would later

IN 1998, DIDDY, then at his Puff Daddy zenith, threw his first White Party in East Hampton. "I had the craziest mix," he told Oprah in 2006. "Some of my boys from Harlem; Leonardo DiCaprio, after he'd just finished *Titanic*. I had socialites there and relatives from down South." It registered as a capsule of the era—Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian, Al Sharpton, and Salman Rushdie would attend in the years to come—and an emblem of hip-hop's cultural weight. The commingling of rappers, the business class, and the social set was a novel phenomenon, and Diddy's party distilled it into an event that Manhattan media could obsess over in its own backyard. "The people in the Hamptons thought the first party was the end of the world," Steven Gaines, the author of *Philistines at the Hedgerow: Passion and Property in the Hamptons*, said in *The Hollywood Reporter*'s 20th anniversary commemoration of the party. A decade later, with hip-hop long the dominant force in American culture, Diddy retired the event with one last bash in Los Angeles in 2009.

There have since been many parties with a similar dress code, but to pick up where Diddy left off, a host would need

“*Let me ask you a question,” says Rubin. “Of most **WEALTHY PEOPLE**, I’m talking people that are worth **MANY BILLIONS**, what percent do you think are fun?*”

release a song about the event and a music video that pulled from the footage—and Rubin's 17-year-old daughter, Kylie, rested her head against the van window. Rubin regaled Baby, engaged and occasionally puffing from a sour apple vape, with business tales. "It's cool to be an entrepreneur," Rubin said. "It was almost nerdy to be an entrepreneur when I was a kid."

Rubin had come to see Baby as a brother in the years since they met. "I always say," he noted, "if I grew up how he grew up, I would have been the biggest drug dealer on the planet."

And if Baby grew up like him, they reasoned, he'd be a full-fledged businessman. "By the way," Rubin said, "I still expect you to be."

the credibility across celebrity spaces, the ambition, and the money. Today, there's Rubin, who bought his \$50 million Bridgehampton home in 2020 and started to host his own White Party—not so much an intrusion into the Hamptons as the crown jewel in a growing social empire. The divisions of fame that Diddy had a hand in flattening have now mostly converged, at least at a certain stratum of wealth. Jay-Z hangs out with Jack Dorsey and sits on the board of his company Block; Dorsey donates to Jay and Rubin's criminal justice reform group; Jay and his entertainment company produce the Super Bowl halftime show; and Rubin throws the party he attends the day before. The high-end pieces of sports, business, and music have been sitting in

NO REGRETS

Michael Rubin's annual summer party has quickly become a celebrity standard-bearer. Previous spread: with Lil Baby, La La Anthony, and Kim Kardashian; with DJ Khaled, Ajay Sangha, Odell Beckham Jr., Corey Gamble, and Micah Parsons; with Tom Brady, George Condo, Travis Scott, and Quavo.



HYPER LINKS

1. Rubin with Robert Kraft. 2. With Meek Mill (center). 3. With James Harden. 4. With Lil Baby (right) courtside in Philadelphia.

close proximity, and Rubin has become relentless about putting them together.

"Obviously, I'm working 24/7 most days," Rubin said on the jet, but the Fourth of July was approaching. "I'm gonna have a party at my house with a good group of people. And I'll go from 5 p.m. to 5 or 6 a.m. And we'll be like kids, we'll just have a great time." Eager, boisterous, and prone to backslaps and fits of free association, he wore his CEO impresario role lightly.

"Are you mentally prepared?" he asked Baby. "Double or nothing on last year's bet?" If Rubin fell asleep first, Baby would shave his head; if it was Baby, Rubin would snip three of his braids.

The party has quickly picked up an aura as the sort of venue, exceedingly rare in the smartphone era, in which Rubin's famous pals can truly throw caution to the wind. The year before, his girlfriend, 32-year-old model Camille Fishel, with whom he has two young children, fell off a stage (Drake, Travis Scott, Diplo, and more performed) and ended up in a neck brace at the hospital. Rubin recalled more of the party's gentle debauchery. "Which D'Amelio sliced her finger?" he asked Baby, Kylie, and a few Fanatics employees on hand. (Kylie's mother,

Meegan, and Rubin divorced in 2012.)

"I keep that thing so authentic," Rubin said. "We don't commercialize it at all."

The third go-around of the event in July crystallized Rubin's standing as a connector while also reaching a new level of saturation. If the hip-hop and sports worlds had long been aware of Rubin, this year's event saw more coverage in the general gossip press of TMZ and the *Daily Mail*. Kardashian and DiCaprio made the jump between White Parties. Jay-Z drove his longtime friend Tyran "Ty Ty" Smith, Corey Gamble (boyfriend of Kris Jenner), and the Israeli investor Vivi Nevo over in a Land Rover to meet Beyoncé, whose mother, Tina Knowles, arrived with Kelly Rowland. Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez arrived with Violet, Affleck's daughter with Jennifer Garner. Adam Weitsman, the upstate New York scrap metal magnate, posed with the Chicago drill rapper Lil Durk. In turn, Rubin's gathering became one of the gaudiest and most heavily dissected celebrity spectacles in recent memory, or as he put it in an Instagram supercut he posted the next day, "a literal movie."

Much of the ensuing tabloid coverage circled a basic question: Who is Michael

Rubin? "It was game on with Tom Brady and model Emily Ratajkowski—NOT Kim Kardashian" at the party, the *Daily Mail* reported, kicking off a new rumor cycle while throwing cold water on its last. (Kardashian was indeed there and used her appearance as a mini content cycle of her own, recounting that she drank 11 shots.) ESPN's Stephen A. Smith chided Rubin on his podcast for not inviting him. 50 Cent, echoing one swath of social media reaction, criticized Baby for a photograph in which he grinned widely as Rubin hugged him around the neck with seeming force.

"Can't believe Puff let a white brother take July 4 Hamptons white [party] away from him," the veteran hip-hop journalist Elliott Wilson wrote on Twitter.

The following week, Rubin sat in his office at Fanatics' Manhattan headquarters and pondered the party's successes. "The White Party, pretty well-run, to be honest," he said. "There's always little tweaks. I'd say we got more of that right than wrong." A few days later, he and Fanatics held a party with the National Basketball Players Association in Las Vegas. It was fatiguing, he said, but necessary—"just going to touch all the people that are important to us."

Rubin and his Fanatics lieutenants are fond of mentioning the 1.87 GPA he had at Villanova before he dropped out after a semester to focus on business. He professed to compensate socially. “Let me ask you a question,” he said. “Of most wealthy people, I’m talking people that are worth many billions, what percent do you think are fun?”

Ten?

“I think one. They’re mostly painfully boring. They’re the most stiff, they can’t speak, they’re boring as shit. And by the way, most are old too. I’m relatively young and relatively fun. So I think it’s a unique setup.”

He was proud of his business, his relationships, and, he emphasized a few times, his appetite for indulgence. “I’m a maniac when I’m drunk,” he offered, recalling how Kraft once FaceTimed him at 10:30 a.m. “I was still in the casino with James Harden and Baby.”

Curled up on a couch with his sneakers tucked under him, Rubin, wearing shorts and a Louis Vuitton polo, held a more measured pose than when he was flying around the Northeast the month prior. Looking back on the last few years, “Fanatics got bigger, I got more well-known,” he said. “I think that’s generally good for the business.” The night before, he had been at the opening of Jay-Z’s Brooklyn Public Library retrospective, and in a few hours, he’d head to the 20th anniversary gala for the rapper-mogul’s education foundation.

RUBIN GREW UP in a middle-class family in a largely white suburb of Philadelphia. “I was always selling stuff,” he said. At 14, it was used skis; then liquidated goods; then an e-commerce company, GSI Commerce, that he founded when he was 26 and that eBay bought for \$2.4 billion in 2011. Fanatics was then a subset of GSI and he bought it back from eBay to continue his ongoing expansion into sports, turning the operation into one that depended on the company’s relationships and licensing deals with the major sports leagues. Last year, he sold his minority stakes in the 76ers and New Jersey Devils to avoid a conflict of interest when Fanatics got into the sports gambling business.

The move came with some strife. Earlier this year, Fanatics offered the sports gambling operation PointsBet \$150 million for its US business. Jason

Robins, CEO of sports book rival DraftKings, announced a \$195 million offer in response, which Rubin described at the time as a “desperate” attempt to slow Fanatics down. Rubin said he had been a friend to Robins, who once stayed at his house. He raised his offer by \$75 million and proceeded with the acquisition. “They just decided they wanted to be disruptive to us,” he said. “That’s a guy who wants to compete but he’s got the EQ of a gnat.” (“Michael is someone Jason considers a friend,” DraftKings said in a statement. “DraftKings’ proposal to acquire PointsBet was solely a business decision that we felt was in the best interest of our company and shareholders at the time.”)

“One thing I’ve learned,” Rubin added, “is the bigger we get, the more people you have conspiring behind your back.”

In 2015, Rubin met Meek Mill. As each has often recalled, they were sitting courtside at the NBA All-Star Game. Meek was dating Nicki Minaj at the time, and Kylie, then eight, was a fan of hers and approached. Meek and Rubin started talking too; neither knew who the other was, but they were from different parts of the Philadelphia area and stayed in touch. “My life was a lot simpler then,” Rubin said. “We were hanging a lot, having fun together.”

Meek, then 27, had been on probation since he was a teenager, stemming from drug and gun charges. (The conviction was eventually overturned.) He had been trying to tell Rubin about the unfairness and precarity of his situation, but by Rubin’s account, “it just went in one ear and out the other.” In 2017, Meek brought Rubin to a hearing about a pair of his recent parole violations, and Rubin was stunned to watch a judge sentence his friend to prison. “That was the most out of control I’ve ever felt in my life,” he said, “because here I am as this relatively successful businessperson in the state that I grew up in, watching them put someone in jail for two to four years for not committing a crime.”

The case quickly became a go-to reference point in the national conversation around mass incarceration and prison reform. “Free Meek” was a rallying cry, and Rubin publicly campaigned on his behalf. “What’s happening to Meek Mill is just one example of how our criminal justice system entraps and harasses hundreds of thousands of black people every

day,” Jay-Z, who had signed Meek to a management deal through Roc Nation, wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed. When Meek was released the following year, Rubin picked him up in a helicopter and brought him straight to a 76ers playoff game. The circumstances of this homecoming were widely publicized, and after Meek and Rubin reunited, they joined with Jay-Z and Kraft to create Reform Alliance, an advocacy organization focused on changing probation and parole laws.

The group wasn’t alone in an escalating celebrity sector of the movement. Rubin began working with Kardashian, who started studying law and met with then president Donald Trump concerning the case of Alice Marie Johnson. (In 1997, Johnson was sentenced to life in prison on drug and money-laundering charges. Trump pardoned her.)

As Rubin’s company and his activism grew, so did his visibility. Along with Jay-Z, Meek, and others, he gave Kraft a Bentley for his 80th birthday in 2021. He had been a friend to athletes, to musicians, and now to a more general class of celebrity. Criminal-justice issues had become a constant in his life—“I’m, like, maniacally focused”—but he has more recently noticed the winds shifting once more.

“The pendulum has swung back and forth,” Rubin said. “Think about it. No one cared about the issue when we started, then everyone cared about it when George Floyd happened. No one cares about it again.”

AS RUBIN AND Baby arrived in Philadelphia in June, they stepped aside for a rapt-looking conversation with 76ers center Joel Embiid. Rubin, Embiid later said, stood apart from the other sports business figures he’d come into contact with over his career. “He’s willing to listen, he understands, and he’s not afraid of controversy,” he said. “And he’s a hard worker, that’s the main thing. This dude don’t stop.”

Gary Vaynerchuk, the advertising guru and irrepressible internet personality, a friend of Rubin’s with his own rap-heavy Rolodex, defined himself and Rubin as “purebred” entrepreneurs—“what I mean by that is you live and breathe it.”

“I think the reason both of us have found relationships in those genres is they are the other humans on earth that are closest to you,” Vaynerchuk said. “In sports and music, you can’t hide. Either

1. 7: SHAHEF ZHANG; 2. 3, 4, 8, 9: ALEX SUBERS; 5, 6: KEVIN MAZUR

there's 100 trillion downloads of your song or there's not. Either you scored 42 points or you didn't."

Though he's keen on forging business partnerships with his friends, Rubin described a more emotional approach too. When he, Embiid, Baby, and Meek recently flew to Las Vegas together, they discussed how they communicate with one another. Embiid told Rubin he didn't say "love you" growing up. "But Joel says to me, love you," Rubin said. "I say to Joel, love you. I say to Meek, love you. I say to Baby, love you."

He grew more animated—extrapolating a few steps from the exchange he was describing. "What the fuck do you mean we don't hug in our culture? I hug 6,000 people a day. Every day, you see me, someone comes in, I give him a hug."

Plenty of middle-aged white men, I proposed to Rubin, would love to be friends with famous, talented young Black men. Before he and Vaynerchuk, there was Trump, who partied with rappers in Manhattan in the '90s, served as lyrical inspiration for more as the years went on, and pardoned Lil Wayne and commuted Kodak Black's sentence in 2021 after hosting Kanye West in the Oval Office.

"First of all, I don't feel middle-aged," Rubin said. And anyway, he pointed out,

he has a more general agenda and cohort. The next day, he had a walk scheduled with Kraft at 7 a.m., where they'd discuss the Sun Valley conference Kraft had just attended, and he had already talked to Brady four times that day.

WHEN I CALLED Meek to hear his rendition of Rubin's foundational friendship, he spoke for 10 minutes without being asked much of a question.

"Mike made a vow to me just as a friend," Meek remembered. "I'm not gonna leave you in here by yourself."

He seemed sensitive to the idea that Rubin had only recently come to the place he's in: "Everybody wondering where Rubin came from, he just popped up on the scene to be around." But Meek pointed to business opportunities Rubin had steered him toward, as well as the duration of their relationship. In 2016, he was on house arrest, and "Mike was in the house, just him and my whole Black family before any of this stuff took place. And now he getting caught up in narratives, people be like, where'd Mike come

from? Yo, Mike is just a young hustler who started a ski business early in Pennsylvania and turned it up."

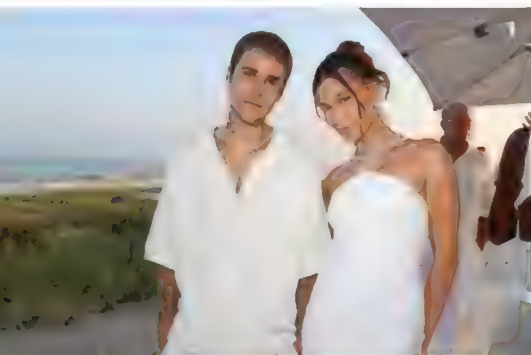
Leaving Philadelphia, Rubin and Baby hopped in an SUV and headed for the helicopter back to New York, returning a missed FaceTime call from La La Anthony on the way. Baby had recently stayed in Rubin's West Village penthouse. "Let's do dinner one night this week," Rubin suggested.

Earlier in the day, he had recounted one of his first entrepreneurial conquests for Baby. "Crazy story," he said. "I don't know if you've ever heard this before." At 14, while operating his ski shop in the summertime, Rubin said he bought 40,000 pounds of ice cubes to make a slope in the parking lot. The novelty attracted press, but it would have been easier, he figured, if he had the tools of social media at his disposal.

Baby listened intently and a little wistfully. "Maybe you could have been 100 times more successful," he said. "Maybe a million times." ■

HEAT SEEKER

At Rubin's White Party: 1. Justin and Hailey Bieber. 2. Usher performs. 3. Rubin with Kylian Mbappé. 4. With Leonardo DiCaprio and guests. 5. Jay-Z and Beyoncé.



WAR OF THE



W O R L D S

The US military is pivoting its training operations from the anti-guerrilla tactics used in Afghanistan and Iraq to plans for a full-on, dug-in, nuclear-armed confrontation with an enemy superpower like Russia or China.

Novelist and ex-Marine PHIL KLAY and photojournalist PETER VAN AGTMAEL report on war's grave new frontier



AMERICA'S MILITARY IS preparing for a different kind of war. After two decades in Iraq and Afghanistan fighting insurgents and terrorist groups who used guerrilla-style tactics, the US armed forces have a new focus: "peer-to-peer combat." War between great nations with large militaries. War—hypothetically—with Russia or with China. Combat of the sort America hasn't engaged in since Korea. As alarming as it may sound, every branch of the Defense Department is currently undergoing a major restructuring, reevaluating doctrine, weaponry, tactics, and training to prepare for just this kind of war. After a recent trip to Washington, DC—to help military experts workshop peer-to-peer war—Austrian army officer Franz-Stefan Gady, an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, told me that this new cultural and tactical pivot among the world's major powers "could be as big of a change as going from frontier soldiers chasing Comanches to the Civil War."

As a result, Peter van Agtmael's photos on these pages, showing recent exercises by the 101st Airborne's Second Brigade Combat Team, don't just document training for air assaults and ambushes (a tactic once memorably defined by Lieutenant Colonel Charles Armstrong as an "act of premeditated murder and terrorism against strangers"). At Fort Campbell, Kentucky (and later at Fort Johnson, Louisiana—formerly Fort Polk—which van Agtmael also documented), soldiers of the brigade learned to fight at night against electronic warfare jamming, against unmanned aerial systems and counterfire radars. They learned to breach complex mine and wire

obstacles, to defeat enemy motorized counterattacks. "Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we oriented on high-end combat against a peer threat," explained Colonel Ed Matthaideess, the brigade's commander. Peers, of course, are America's fellow superpowers.

In practice, that means thousands of soldiers operating in synchronicity to deliver overwhelming firepower. And in an era of drones and other high-tech surveillance assets to help adversaries deliver fire at long range, soldiers can't expect to operate out of combat outposts or forward operating bases as they did in Iraq, where they could count on a warm bed and hot food more often than not. In contrast, soldiers can expect extended periods in the field, living out of a rucksack, dispersed and camouflaged in dug-in fighting positions before massing to attack.

This was not the military's focus when van Agtmael first met Matthaideess in 2006, in Mosul, Iraq. Right then the US military was transitioning to counterinsurgency, a population-centric style of warfare in which American troops spend time patrolling towns and villages, learning the cultural, political, ethnic, religious, and economic forces of a region and, ideally, developing relationships with local leaders in an attempt to effect not simply military success but a change in the nature of the society where they fight.

The quintessential training exercise of the counterinsurgency era was the meetup with "tribal elders." An infantry squad would patrol in an imaginary desert toward a pretend sheik and drink chai while talking about how they could help improve security in the area. Sometimes the stand-in sheik or elder was an actual Iraqi or Afghan immigrant hired to play the role with the utmost realism. In 2009, I remember sitting in a forest in North Carolina and asking a young infantryman headed to Afghanistan how his unit would succeed. "Through cultural effectiveness," he told me, a line his leaders had clearly impressed upon him. That kid ended up in the famously violent Sangin District, where the cultural, political, ethnic, religious, and economic forces all converged on one point: murderous hostility to American troops.

The Fort Campbell and Fort Johnson training sessions included a few of their

own "key leader engagements," simulated meetings with military and political leaders, but that wasn't the emphasis. In van Agtmael's photos, Humvees and even soldiers' heads are decorated with leafy branches, their goal to blend not with the local population but with the inhuman landscape. It's a more natural and even comfortable place for professional soldiers to be—killers in hiding, not junior sociologists strolling through Murderville.

Van Agtmael, who for almost two decades has covered combat, especially the US military at war, has documented units like this before—young kids just out of high school, eager for combat. He's seen them turn into hardened veterans. He's seen the bloody tables of trauma hospitals, the postwar struggles of the burned and maimed—along with their triumphs and joys—the whole life cycle of war. Yet here he was, back at the beginning, in a fresh Army unit where only one out of 20 soldiers has been to war and fewer have been in an actual gunfight. "They told me they didn't care who they fought, Russia or China, they just wanted to fight," he recounted, clearly disturbed that nothing these young men and women had seen or heard in their lives—lives

lived almost entirely during the span of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—had seemed to have made them skeptical about who might send them to battle and why.

What's strange, though, is that troops training for this

style of warfare are likely to face a lot less actual combat than that young infantryman touting cultural effectiveness. Since the task of the Second Brigade Combat Team is to prepare for wars against countries with nuclear weapons, the balance of power will not be decided by the number of leafy branches you stick onto your Humvee. If a truly hot war with a nuclear-armed adversary comes, we have already lost—"we" meaning not just America but the whole human race. And even in a limited war, where both sides keep their nukes in reserve, the losses will quickly become staggering.

"If China fought it out, it'd be the first war since the Civil War where the US mainland was threatened," Gady maintained. "America's wars are never coming home to you. You always have a safe haven, like those Norman Rockwell paintings, where Thanksgiving will always be served. But

INTO THE BREACH

Opposite: GIs play cards between training exercises. Previous spread: soldiers before a mock assault at Fort Johnson (formerly Fort Polk), Louisiana.



China will have to hit US critical infrastructure. There's not going to be a safe haven."

And so, training a brigade of soldiers skilled in the complex American style of warfare—where units maneuver flexibly and use a combination of arms, from tanks to artillery to light infantry to close air support, augmented by up-to-date technologies and strategies—is, secretly, all about ultimately *not* fighting.

Which is precisely why, after these training exercises, the brigade headed to Eastern Europe, where it was the closest American force to the ongoing war, just 13 miles from the Ukrainian border with Romania. The brigade trained alongside 18 allied partners, though the point of the deployment was as much to send a message as it was to build relationships and skills with other NATO militaries. "Many of these exercises drew a Russian response in the media," Matthaidess said, "because they feared us in the region." Perhaps. It certainly let Russia know that America was getting ready for a potential face-off against the Russian Army. And it signaled US support, and US capabilities, to the Eastern European

countries whose lands would be the primary battleground in a broader war.

When he was preparing to fight Russian proxy forces in the Donbas a few years prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian soldier and writer Artem Chekh described the impact of meeting American troops like the ones Matthaidess commands. Chekh looked around at the Ukrainian infantry of which he was a part, a motley group with poor weapons and equipment, resembling, he noted, the "homeless kids of the 1920s." Chekh himself wasn't even wearing boots but New Balance sneakers...and he was *envied* for his footwear. And then there were the Americans, the perfect image of how an Army should be and how it should be equipped. "Look at their Hummers," he gushed to a fellow Ukrainian, "look at their ammo, look into the eyes of the African American soldier with the high-tech gear."

The Americans didn't go on to actually fight the Russians, though. The "homeless kids of the 1920s" did, while from the sidelines US troops and their NATO allies offered weaponry and training and assistance with operational planning, as

well as assurance to the rest of Europe that their transatlantic brother was there to keep the alliance together. Chekh, who is better equipped now but still fighting, spoke to me in May about his fellow soldiers coming to terms with the very real possibility of their own deaths in the coming months and years. Those who make it through will have many more lessons about peer-to-peer combat to teach their stateside counterparts than the other way around.

Two decades ago, van Agtmael was not so different from the young soldiers he photographed. He was obsessed with war, eager to go into the teeth of it, even if he knew there were many things wrong about that impulse. When we connect with his images—impactful and ominously surreal but also ambivalent and even untidy—it's not in judgment so much as through the lens of his own bewildered hindsight of two decades of combat photography. He knows how this works. To do their jobs the young men in these photos need to be ready, even eager, for war. But if we ever have to fight the kind of war for which they're training, God help us. ■





**THE FOG OF
WAR GAMES**

Battle prep entails
colored smoke
used to lure a unit
into a would-be
ambush at Fort
Campbell, Kentucky.



COMBAT 3.11

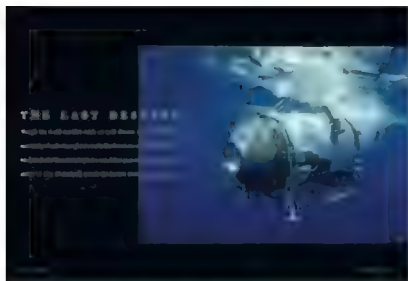
A soldier, his gear
neatly blended into
the field of battle
prepares to "take
over" a house.
Opposite, from top:
Troops move
in on an enemy
village in a
large-scale assault
at Fort Johnson;
camouflage cloth
a Humvee during
nighttime drills
at Fort Campbell.







DAWN PATROL
Soldiers of the
101st Airborne
soon to be
deployed to Europe
to help train other
NATO forces,
take "enemy fire"
in a forest at
Fort Johnson



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

RUSH IGNORED THE Marine Technology Society's letter. He ignored the fact that it was signed—at the top—by Don Walsh. Don Walsh! If you know anything about the deep ocean, you know that when Don Walsh speaks, you shut up and listen.

"Not only doesn't he tell the truth, what's his name—Rush," Walsh said. "He's absolutely 14-karat self-certitude."

"Have you met him?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," Walsh said tartly.

"What was your impression?"

Walsh chuckled. "Oh, he tolerated me. He was correct. He was polite. He really wanted to tell me how he was all out on the cutting edges of technology, places I couldn't even imagine."

Rush ignored the fact that the letter was signed by a cofounder of EYOS Expeditions, Rob McCallum, whom he'd known since 2009 and had tried unsuccessfully to hire for OceanGate's *Titanic* operations. McCallum's client list was awash in wealthy ocean explorers. He'd led seven expeditions to the *Titanic* with Russia's two *Mir* submersibles, and had dived to the wreck himself. When McCallum learned more about the *Titan*, he wanted nothing to do with it: "I've never allowed myself to be associated with an unclassified vehicle. Ever."

Rush ignored the fact that the letter was signed by Terry Kerby, a former Coast Guard navigator who led the Hawaii Undersea Research Lab for 38 years and had made more than 900 sub dives in the Pacific. "You have enough to worry about if you're exploring volcanoes or shipwrecks without having to worry about whether your submersible is going to survive," Kerby told me.

"Would you ever agree to pilot a sub that wasn't classed?" I asked.

"Never. Nope. No."

Rush ignored the fact that the letter was signed by Patrick Lahey, who had warned Rush repeatedly about the *Titan*'s

dangers—he also quietly paid the Lochridges' legal fees in the hope that the inspection report would be dissected in court and made public. But to Lahey's "bitter disappointment," Lochridge decided to settle, withdrawing his OSHA complaint. "I think Stockton had really intimidated him and frightened him," Lahey said. "I certainly would have continued that fight, because I believe you take something like that right to the end. But he didn't want to, and I knew it wasn't my decision."

By spring 2018, it was evident that Rush's deep-sea sub would never be certified. "*Titan* could not get classed because it was built of the wrong material and it was built the wrong way," McCallum said. "So once Stockton made up his mind, he was on a path from which there was no return. He could have stopped, but he could never fix it."

Rush was angry that McCallum had been steering EYOS's clients away from diving in the *Titan*, though many had expressed interest. "I have given everyone the same honest advice which is that until a sub is classed, tested, and proven it should not be used for commercial deep dive operations," McCallum wrote to Rush in March 2018. "4,000 [meters] down in the mid-Atlantic is not the kind of place you can cut corners."

AT KOHNEN'S INVITATION, I attended the Marine Technology Society's 2019 meeting, and by that time Rush had been ignoring its letter for a year. "The program is an overview of manned submersible operations worldwide," Kohnen said, addressing the group. "Today, we're doing the deep submersible review work." This consisted of an alphabetical rundown of every deep sub and the status of its operations. When he got to the letter O, Kohnen cleared his throat. "Anybody here from OceanGate?" (Silence.) "No?"

OceanGate's recalcitrance was like smog hovering over the conference room. During a coffee break, I heard the *Titan* mentioned in the same breath as the *UC3 Nautilus*, a creepy Danish sub whose owner had killed and dismembered journalist Kim Wall on a dive. In a corner, two marine engineers were worked up, and I caught a snatch of their conversation: "When it's compressing it can actually buckle," one engineer said in an exasperated tone, referring to Rush's carbon fiber hull. "Like if you stand on an empty soda can." The other engineer snorted and

said: "I wouldn't get into that thing for any amount of money."

Clearly, Rush would do as he pleased. He would register the *Titan* in the Bahamas and sail from a Canadian port into international waters, thus skirting Coast Guard regulations that any commercial sub must be classed. OceanGate's lawyer, Thomas Gilman, emphasized in a legal filing against the Lochridges that the *Titan* "will operate exclusively outside the territorial waters of the United States."

Anyway, Rush wasn't carrying paying customers—he was enlisting "mission specialists." This wasn't some cute marketing ploy, like American Airlines giving a kid a set of plastic pilot's wings. In maritime law, crew receive much lighter protections than commercial passengers—and to Rush's mind, calling them mission specialists and putting them to work on the ship made them crew.

So, yes. Many people felt that a catastrophe was brewing with the *Titan*, but at the same time everybody's hands were tied.

ON THE TITAN'S second deep test dive in April 2019—an attempt to reach 4,000 meters in the Bahamas—the sub protested with such bloodcurdling noises that its descent was halted at 3,760 meters. Rush was the pilot, and he had taken three passengers on this highly risky plunge. One of them was Karl Stanley, a seasoned submersible pilot who would later describe the noises as "the hull yelling at you." Stanley had built his own experimental unclassified sub and operated it in Honduras. But even he was so rattled by the dive that he wrote several emails to Rush urging him to postpone the *Titan*'s commercial debut, less than two months away.

The carbon fiber was breaking down, Stanley believed: "I think that hull has a defect near that flange that will only get worse. The only question in my mind is will it fail catastrophically or not." He advised Rush to step back and conduct 50 unmanned test dives before any other humans got into the sub. True to form, Rush dismissed the advice—"One experiential data point is not sufficient to determine the integrity of the hull"—telling Stanley to "keep your opinions to yourself."

"I remember him saying at one point to me that one of the reasons why he had me on that dive was he expected that I would be able to keep my mouth shut about anything that was of a sensitive nature," Stanley told me in a phone interview.

"Like what?" I asked.

"I don't think he wanted everybody knowing about the cracking sounds."

But Rush did make an accommodation to reality. He sent out a press release heralding the *Titan*'s "History Making Deep-Sea Dive to 3,760 Meters With Four Crew Members," and then a month later canceled the 2019 *Titanic* expedition. (He'd also scrubbed the 2018 dives, claiming the *Titan* had been hit by lightning.) Now, Rush was off to build a new hull.

SURELY, PEOPLE IN the submersible world thought, Rush would come to his senses. Surely, he wouldn't actually go through with this?

But he did. 2020 was a write-off because of COVID. In 2021, Rush took his first group of "mission specialists" to the *Titanic*—and with him now, as part of his team, was PH Nargeolet.

It's not that Nargeolet's friends didn't try to stop him. "Oh, we...we *all* tried," Lahey said. "I tried so hard to tell him not to go out there. I fucking begged him, 'Don't go out there, man.'"

It's that Nargeolet knew everything they were saying was true and wanted to go anyway. "Maybe it's better if I'm out there," Lahey recalls Nargeolet saying. "I can help them from doing something stupid or people getting hurt." In the implosion's aftermath, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* would report that Nargeolet had told his family that he was wary of the *Titan*'s carbon fiber hull and its oversized viewport, assessing them as potential weak spots.

Now the reports are emerging about the plague of problems on OceanGate's 2021 and 2022 *Titanic* expeditions; more dives scrubbed or aborted than completed—for an assortment of reasons from major to minor. A communications system that never much worked. Battery problems, electrical problems, sonar problems, navigation problems. Getting all the way down to the seafloor and then fumbling around for hours trying to find the wreck. ("I mean, how do you *not* find a 50,000 ton ship?" Lahey asked me, incredulous, in July 2022.)

One group had been trapped inside the sub for 27 hours, stuck on the balky launch and recovery platform. Others were sealed inside the sub for up to five hours before it launched, sweltering in sauna-like conditions. Arthur Loibl, a German businessman who dove in 2021, described it to the Associated Press as a "kamikaze operation."

When the world learned of the *Titan*'s disappearance on June 18, no one I know in deep-sea circles believed that it was simply lost, floating somewhere, unseen because—the mind reels—it didn't have an emergency beacon. No one believed that its passengers were slowly running out of oxygen. If the sub were entangled amid the *Titanic* wreck, that wouldn't explain why its tracking and communications signals had vanished simultaneously at 3,347 meters. "The fear was collapse," Lahey said bluntly. "The fear was always pressure hull failure with that craft."

But the families didn't know, and the public didn't know, and it would be ghastly not to hope for some miracle. But which was better to hope for? That they perished in an implosion at supersonic speed—or that they were alive with hardly a chance of being found, left to suffocate for four days in a sub that had all the comforts of an MRI machine?

NO KNOWLEDGE OF the tragedy was preparation enough for watching television coverage of the *Titan*'s entrails being craned off the recovery ship *Horizon Arctic*. Eight-inch-thick titanium bonding rings, bent. Snarls of cables, mangled debris, sheared metal, torn exterior panels: They seemed to have been wrenched from Grendel's claws in some mythical under-sea battle. But no, it was simply math. A cold equation showing what the pressure of 6,000 psi does to an object unprepared to meet it.

One person involved in the recovery effort, who wishes to remain anonymous, told me that the wreckage itself was proof that no one aboard the sub had suffered: "From what I saw of all the remaining bits and pieces, it was so violent and so fast."

"What did the carbon fiber look like?" I asked.

"There was no piece I saw anywhere that had its original five-inch thickness," he said. "Just shards and bits.... It was truly catastrophic. It was shredded."

"Is there any possible reason the *Titan* could have imploded other than its design and construction were unsuitable?" I asked Jarl Stromer, the manager of class and regulatory compliance for Triton Submarines. Stromer, who has worked in the industry since 1987, is an expert on the rules, codes, and standards for every type of manned sub.

"No," he replied flatly. "OceanGate bears full responsibility for the design,

fabrication, testing, inspection, operation, maintenance, catastrophic failure of the *Titan* submersible, and the deaths of all five people on board."

After the tragedy OceanGate went dark, suspending its operations. Its website and social media channels were suddenly gone, its promotional videos deleted. Emails sent to the company received this reply: "Thank you for reaching out. OceanGate is unable to provide any additional information at this time." Phone calls were greeted with a disconnection notice.

Only one person familiar with OceanGate's thinking would speak to me on the record: Guillermo Söhnlein, who cofounded the company with Rush. And Söhnlein left that post in 2013. "So I don't have any direct knowledge or experience with the development of the *Titan*. I've never dived in *Titan*. I've never been on the *Titanic* expedition," he told me. "All I know is, I know Stockton, and I know the founding of OceanGate, and I know how we operated for the first few years."

Okay, then. What should people know about Rush? "I think he did see himself in the same vein as these disruptive innovators," Söhnlein said. "Like Thomas Edison, or any of these guys who just found a way of pushing humanity forward for the good of humanity—not necessarily for himself. He didn't need the money. He certainly didn't need to work and spend hundreds of hours on OceanGate. You know, he was doing this to help humanity. At least that's what I think was personally driving him."

BEFORE THE TITAN'S last descent, there hadn't been a fatal accident in a human-occupied submersible for nearly 50 years—despite a 2,000 percent increase in the annual number of dives. In the 93-year history of manned deep-sea exploration, no submersible had ever imploded. "Ultimately, it comes down to not just technology," Kohnen told me, "but the rigor of the nerdy, detailed engineering that goes behind it, to determine that things are predictable."

Those rules Rush so disdained? They had been refined, honed, universally adopted—and they had worked. Submersibles had earned their title as the world's least risky mode of transportation even as they operated in the world's riskiest environment. Because there is one last rule that every deep-sea explorer knows: The goal is not to dive. The goal is to dive, and to come back. ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69 of a horde of competition while not destroying humanity in the process.

When I spoke to Mira Murati, OpenAI's chief technology officer, about this, she acknowledged what was at stake but also what the world stands to gain from the most important technological advancement in human history. And while AI Gandhi is out there on his world tour, Murati is the one tasked with the actual challenges of building the technology that could save the world or destroy it and any number of scenarios in between. "I certainly worry about the pace of technological progress, particularly as it relates to society's ability to adapt to these changes," Murati said to me. "We worry about this every day, that's why we're here. But I also think it is futile to think that the way to a good outcome, so to speak, is to slow down or stop innovation." She added: "Even if I quit, even if a bunch of my colleagues quit, technological progress will move forward."

Unlike the Marc Andreessens of the world, who act like AI is going to be all rainbows, sunshine, and fairy dust, Murati, to my surprise, admitted that things will absolutely go wrong with AI, but that her job is to ensure that when they do, they can be stopped and fixed as quickly as possible. "So I don't think the goal is to have absolutely no risks," she said. "It is to reduce the amount of risk in the near term, and to be able to respond very quickly when it happens." Murati noted that the company recently devoted \$1 billion to do the research necessary to ensure OpenAI's solutions do not obliterate the planet, though there are no guarantees. (Altman recently said something similar to a Senate subcommittee, noting that "I think if this technology goes wrong, it can go quite wrong. And we want to be vocal about that.")

OpenAI has also not been shy about outlining its goals as a company, which is to build machines with that fabled superintelligence, computers that are

exponentially smarter than humans. This means that LLMs would have to expand beyond language and start to master perception and reasoning, and start to pursue the holy grail of AI, which is self-supervised learning, self-awareness, and self-improvement. (It's unclear if consciousness is a requirement in order to reach these milestones.)

Altman believes, as he told the *Times*, that AGI will bring the world prosperity and wealth like no one has ever seen. And Altman seems unstoppable in his quest to be the first to do so. Right now the company is definitely toeing the line of being liked and being up-front. When Altman went before Congress earlier this year to talk about the potentials of AI, some in the industry felt he was being disingenuous with his calls to regulate. "It's like inviting the head of the gun manufacturers to come before Congress to talk about how safe guns are for society," an AI executive told me about Altman. Indeed, his actions are sometimes different from the words coming out of his mouth. While Altman was on his world tour in June talking about the need for "global AI regulation," behind the scenes, according to documents obtained by *Time*, he was aggressively pressing the European Union to water down its AI Act, specifically to not classify OpenAI's tools as "high risk," which would have subjected the company to stringent legal requirements—including transparency, traceability, and human oversight.

To be fair to Altman and OpenAI, most leaders in Silicon Valley who get called before Congress say that they need to be regulated—ahem, Mark Zuckerberg—when in reality, behind the scenes, they fight it tooth and nail. "I think it's really easy to make broad statements about wanting to be regulated, knowing the devil's in the details," Murphy said about all the tech companies in Silicon Valley talking about regulation and AI. "They are going to talk a big game when it comes to regulation and the potential serious downside, but in the end, they are going to monetize this as bigly and quickly as they can."

For Altman, it's as if he's trying to run a marathon on the edge of a razor blade. He needs the support of big business to grow OpenAI and expand, but at the same time, AI is going to obliterate millions of jobs worldwide, and quickly. For example, call centers in India make up 8 percent of that country's GDP. In Brazil, it's 6.3 percent.

The US, despite having already outsourced millions of those jobs to places like India and Brazil, still employs 3.4 million people who work in call centers. Call centers could be the first job to be completely replaced by AI, and the repercussions could be disastrous. "Take away 8 percent of a country's GDP and what do you think will happen?" Kedrosky said. "You're going to see pitchforks in the streets."

One AI CEO I spoke with said that the CIOs of Fortune 500 companies are very vocal about cutting their workforce in half in the coming years—then it will likely be cut in half again and again, until a handful of employees are overseeing LLMs to do the same work thousands of people used to do. According to a report by the outplacement service provider Challenger, Gray & Christmas, which tracks layoffs across the United States, 5 percent of people who were laid off in the first quarter of this year lost their jobs to AI. Now, while that number isn't staggering by any proportion (yet), what is distressing is that this is the first time in the 30-year history of the company's report that it has cited AI as a reason for layoffs.

Murati seems to genuinely believe that if OpenAI gets this right, the upsides could save humanity from itself, solving a long list of problems from world hunger to education to energy crises. "It seems like when this problem of existential risk comes up, it dilutes the importance of the very present risks that we're dealing with today that we haven't solved and require a lot of engagement and the attention from everyone in [the AI] space," she said.

Just in case, though, Altman seems to have a backup plan: As he told *The New Yorker* in 2016, he has "guns, gold, potassium iodide, antibiotics, batteries, water, gas masks from the Israeli Defense Force, and a big patch of land in Big Sur I can fly to." You know, just in case the world is destroyed by AI or a synthetic virus.

"FULL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE could spell the end of the human race." "AI will save the world." "The risk of something seriously dangerous happening is in the five-year time frame." "It's easier to imagine all the things that can go wrong than it is to imagine the ones that go right, and a lot of things will go right." "With AI we're summoning the demon." "Humanity being destroyed as a result of the AI path that we're on, I just don't buy that." "We need to shut it all down."

All completely different views on how this will play out. All from experts who understand it better than anyone. This, to me, is the most curious thing about the people who work in AI: They all read (or write) the same AI research; listen to (or talk on) the same podcasts; attend (or speak at) the same conferences. And yet some are AI doomers and others AI dreamers.

Kelly, the *Wired* cofounder, believes it'll be mostly good. But even so, he's not sure how it will eventually play out. "There are basically four kinds of relationships that we'll have with robots and AI," he explained. "The first is we treat them like pets. The other is we treat them as partners, working alongside them. Then the scariest version is that we treat them like slaves—and that kind of relationship is incredibly corrosive to the owner." (This would be akin to our toddlers yelling at Alexa and Siri because that's how their parents talk to these machines, only on a much grander scale.) Finally, there's the last scenario, that we treat them like gods. "That is what the AI doomers do. They believe the AI will remake itself into a god, with godlike powers, and in a dystopian act of supremacy, the gods will overwhelm us and take our place. So now we have to appease the AI gods and make sure we are 'aligned,' so they treat us nicely."

For doomers, that seems to be the best-case scenario.

Folks like Soares, from the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, worry that the end is nigh, and there are countless ways we could be destroyed. There's the "Gray Goo Scenario," where self-replicating nanobots created by AI with the intention of consuming harmful cells or pathogens accidentally (or intentionally) spiral out of control, endlessly replicating until they turn into a substance known as

gray goo. Another example is the famous "Paper Clip Problem," where an AI is instructed to maximize paper clip production and relentlessly continues its task, eventually converting the entire planet into paper clips and eliminating humans that stand in its way. Going by the posts of Eliezer Yudkowsky, an AI researcher, even a seemingly innocent request for a replica of a strawberry could result in killing us all in a split second. Similarly, if we ask an AI to solve climate change, it might eliminate humans as the most straightforward solution. (Honestly, we'd have that coming.)

There are so many scenarios we can't even imagine if we don't get this right. What I've found from talking to dozens of people about this new invention and what it might bring is that, for most of them, if you work in this field long enough, you eventually see how it could all go terribly wrong—and it scares the living shit out of you.

When the 1956 Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence was held, where the term *AI* was first coined, everyone in attendance saw the positives. Over the ensuing decades, they all came to see the vast potential downsides. Marvin Minsky, who devoted his entire career to AI and the development of superintelligent machines, was always optimistic about what it could do but also worried that AI could become powerful enough to pose a threat to humanity. Lately, more and more people, like Geoffrey Hinton, who has worked in the field of AI for over 50 years, and the founders of Anthropic, an AI company created by a group of former OpenAI engineers, have been terrified by what AI could do to the world. (Anthropic still went ahead and built its own AI chatbot, called Claude, which hopefully won't destroy humanity.)

Which brings me back to all of those

predictions from the experts. You know, the ones that seem almost too surreal to be true. The ones that say we have a 100 percent chance of extinction from AI in the next decade, or the others that give us better odds: 50 percent in 100 years; 20 percent, 9, or even 1. You don't have to be hyperbolic to see how, whether we like it or not, we're all being dragged across that razor blade. After all, modern humans are only 6,000 years old. Just 200 generations. And yet, in the last century alone—in just over 1 percent of that time—we've developed nuclear weapons, biological weapons, and now autonomous weapons. The personal computer is around 50 years old. The iPhone, 16. Today's AI, five.

Numerous government studies published over the past 78 years, since the first atomic bomb was detonated in New Mexico, have estimated that a full-scale nuclear war would kill hundreds of millions of people, and the subsequent nuclear winter, a theorized period of prolonged cold and darkness caused by the fallout from the blasts, could kill hundreds of millions more. At most, a few billion people might die, but there is no scenario where our entire species would disappear. The same is true for biological weapons and chemical warfare, which could kill thousands of people. Guns, bombs, lasers, disease, and famine.

Artificial intelligence, however, is arguably the first technology that could wipe out everyone on the planet. Do your own math: Do you really think we're going to make it another 6,000 years? Another 200 generations? As Kedrosky put it, if we continue unmitigated across this razor blade, the odds are simply inevitable: "Given enough time, and enough AI coin flips, eventually everything goes boom." ■

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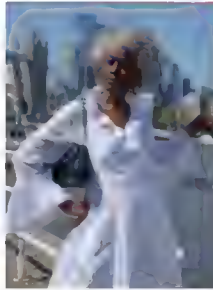
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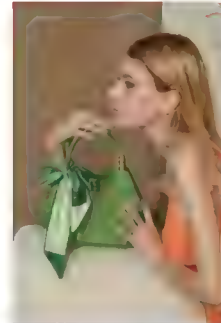
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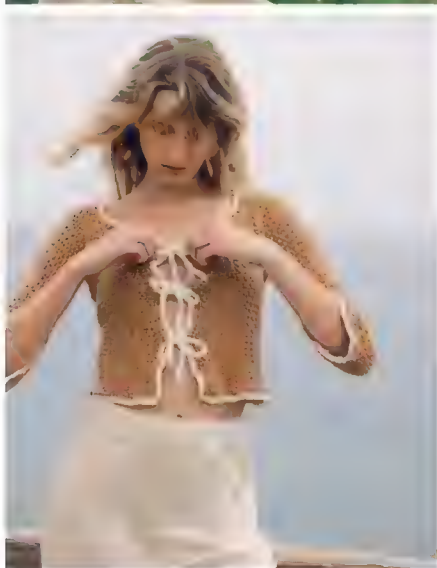
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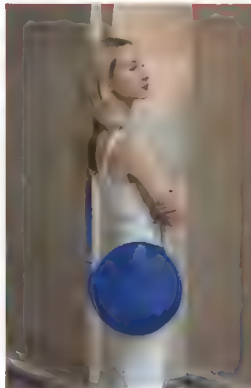
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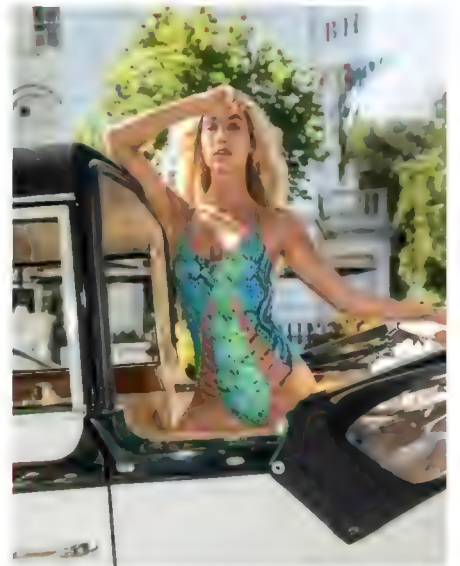
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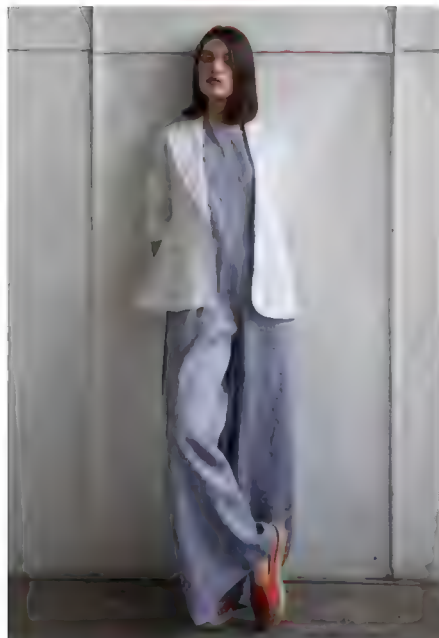


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In a world where consciousness about environmental impact is growing by the day, a refreshing wave of change has emerged from the serene shores of Goa, India. Meet Goya Swim Co, a woman-owned sustainable swimwear brand that is making waves not only for its breathtaking designs, but also for its unwavering commitment to sustainability. They design every swimsuit to be dual purpose. Designs you can swim, dive, surf and stand out poolside. Photography by Duane Jay duanejayonline - visit goyaswimco.com IG: [@goyaswimcompany](https://www.instagram.com/goyaswimcompany)

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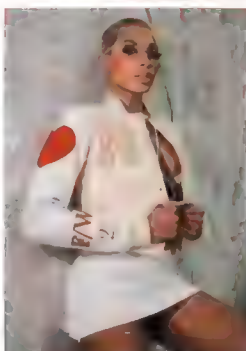
Featured is their Eleonore Cardigan Stripped. Photo: @larissamills – visit [vuuna.com](https://www.vuuna.com) IG: [@_vuuna](https://www.instagram.com/_vuuna)

VUUNA is a Viennese fashion brand with Serbian roots. They create new and qualitative pieces knitted by hand. Each of them is one of-a-kind and exclusive. Biljana, the founder and designer, has a desire for more fairness and female empowerment within the fashion industry. VUUNA is keeping a long-lasting promise with timeless and slowly crafted, high-quality knitwear.

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Mantle 2020, launched in May 2023, is created to fill the space that the founder found consistently lacking in his own wardrobe. Each collection is a capsule wardrobe in itself, designed to be worn together, with future collections always referencing past designs. Every element of each piece is carefully considered. Quiet luxury, designed

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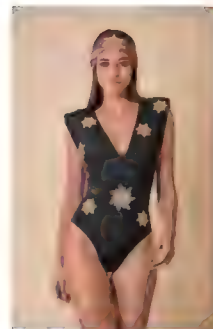
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Normal Culture was founded in 2016 with the mission to design clothing that encourages confidence for tall women and those who love visual expression. Normal Culture sources all fabrics locally in Los Angeles, and all products are handmade by minorities with love, thought, and integrity. Visit

KARLINA'S

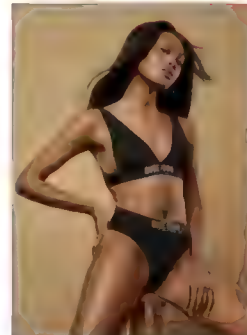
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The swimsuits created by Aurélie Alezeraa for this new collection invite you on a true journey in love with nature, islands and the stars, and the full moon beach parties. The sun, moon and star patterns are made entirely by hand in glass beads, each bead is assembled one by one. Photographer: Marc Richet.

QUEENDOM BY ROMANCE

Visit [queendombyromance.com](https://www.queendombyromance.com) IG: [@queendombyromance](https://www.instagram.com/queendombyromance)

Queendom by Romance is a brand that was born out of love for creating and styling intimate apparel for the modern woman. This Chicago based brand offers a selection of high-quality, minimalistic pieces that are inspired by vintage glamour.

ASHAALIA

Introducing Ashaalia – a bold and empowered haute couture label that represents a new era in generational slow fashion. Combining elements from around the globe, Creative Director and Founder, Asheema Razak, wanted to create a legacy that was reflective of her unique ancestral lineage from India, Pakistan and Punjab. Specialising in hand-beaded, limited edition garments designed in Australia. Wearers of Ashaalia are part of the new generation of circular fashion economy, ensuring treasured, long-lasting pieces can be passed down from wearer to wearer.

Visit [ashaalia.com](https://www.ashaalia.com) IG: [@ash.aalia](https://www.instagram.com/ash.aalia)

The Style Brief

ON1025



Los Angeles-based designer Brynn McIntosh is using her unisex streetwear brand, ON1025 (eponymous with International Artist Day and her birthday) to celebrate creativity and express her journey as an artist through her original characters: Kai, Brynn-Bear, Blaze, Arthur, and Bellatrix
Visit on1025.com IG: [@_on1025_](https://www.instagram.com/_on1025_)

LLAMARI COLLECTION



Llamari Collection is a UK-based brand that specialises in women's sports. The Llamari and Llamari Mama collections have been designed for you, each with their own unique magic. Adjustable maternity bras, to leggings with a 'suck you in' fit. Their quality materials include organic cotton, recycled meryl, and eco-lycra. Visit llamaricollection.com IG: [@llamaricollection](https://www.instagram.com/llamaricollection)

VAMARO



Founded in the Gold Coast, Australia in 2019 by Corey Johnson, Vamaro meticulously creates luxury, durable eyewear which are available in a range of styles. Quality craftsmanship is at the forefront of what they do and from the lenses to the frame, everything is crafted to absolute perfection, ensuring your eyewear will last for years. Visit vamaroeyewear.com IG: [@vamaroeyewear](https://www.instagram.com/vamaroeyewear)

MIRACLES MANIFESTER



Miracles Manifester is your go-to brand for high-end clothing with a powerful meaning. Rooted in the Law of Attraction philosophy, Miracles Manifester infuses every piece with positive affirmations that spark transformation. Their stylish, high-quality designs aren't just about looking good, they're about feeling good and fostering personal growth.

Visit miraclesmanifester.shop IG: [@miraclesmanifestershop](https://www.instagram.com/miraclesmanifestershop)

OUT OF THE BLUE SWIM



Out Of The Blue Swim is a woman-owned business, inspired by the beauty of the sun and the sea. Unique cuts and hand-drawn prints offered in sizes XXS-5XL. Their swimsuits are designed to be lived in and are made with our earth in mind. Photo by [@lalaloopsie](https://www.instagram.com/lalaloopsie). Visit outoftheblueswim.com IG: [@outoftheblueswim](https://www.instagram.com/outoftheblueswim)

The Vanity Cabinet



1. Find true love in a bar! Gentle and pH balanced to help meet the needs of delicate facial skin, **THE ECO ALCHEMIST** Coconut + Watermelon Facial Cleansing Bar is redefining luxury. The bar boasts a beautiful blend of exotic butters, fruit extracts and creamy coconut milk in a planet friendly plastic-free format. Visit theecoalchemist.com IG: [@the.eco.alchemist](https://www.instagram.com/the.eco.alchemist)

2. **FAVEN ESSENTIALS** has a new, rich and creamy curling custard with a zesty aroma that awakens your senses. Use it to help seal in moisture and create the look of long lasting and defined natural styles, curls and coils. Visit favenessentials.com IG: [@favenessentials](https://www.instagram.com/favenessentials)

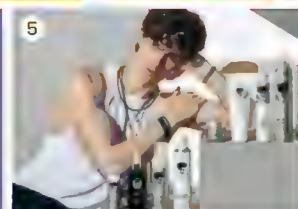
3. **SAFA BODY** is a must have indulgence, formulated with all-natural plant extract organic oils that are cold-pressed and unrefined. Their Rosé Oil is designed to deliver the feeling of firm and smooth skin with a glowing appearance. Housed in a jewel like glass bottle, floating rose petals are infused with essential oil from the gardens of Bulgaria. Visit safabody.com IG: [@safa.body](https://www.instagram.com/safa.body)

4. Formulated to target the look of fine lines, wrinkles, puffiness and dark circles, **MASKTINI**'s Side Eye cream contains potent ingredients. Time-honoured ingredients such as cocoa and shea butter, green tea extract and cucumber water are fused with some of the most technologically advanced complexes. Let the eye envy begin. Visit masktini.com IG: [@masktini](https://www.instagram.com/masktini)

5. Explore grooming at its best with **AVENUE MAN**, created by notable stylist Sergio Slavov. His experiences working with top models and celebrities inspire the line's high-quality, user-friendly products. Shop online at avenueman.com to find the right fit for your unique style and [@avenue.man](https://www.instagram.com/avenue.man) on IG.

6. **COMIS** has developed a nano spray device that makes it easy to apply self tan and other liquid skincare products. The device uses sealed capsules of product to help maintain freshness. True Tan's quick-drying, transparent formula aims to keep your clothes and sheets stain-free and gives a flawless and long-lasting looking result. Visit comis.com IG: [@officialcomis](https://www.instagram.com/officialcomis)

7. Ready to launch in the UK, **BROOSHA** is a 100% plant-based skincare line made in Sardinia. It is formulated for ageing, dry and sensitive skin and aims to leave your skin glowing. The serum and face mist packaging is made with recycled materials and is designed for eco-conscious women that look for unique niche products. Visit broosha.com IG: [@broosha_consciousbeauty](https://www.instagram.com/broosha_consciousbeauty)



8. CRÈME DU LOCH is a multi-award winning, age-defying skincare brand. Scientifically formulated with Scottish Kelp and multi-functional ingredients. A family owned, luxury British brand producing the finest cruelty-free and vegan skincare. Visit cremeduloch.co.uk and [@creme_du_loch](https://www.instagram.com/creme_du_loch) on IG.

9. SOÈM. Fall in love with the most adorable modern oriental scent of niche fragrances. Created in Hamburg, the scent includes natural ingredients of oud, sandalwood and amber. They transport the latest vacation vibes to your daily beauty routine. Visit so-em.com IG: [@soem_official](https://www.instagram.com/soem_official)

10. MAISON APOTHECARE introduces it's Healing Oil Night Edition, designed to reduce the appearance of fine lines. An evolution of their best-selling Healing Oil, this advanced plant-based elixir is the perfect addition to a night-time routine. Visit maisonapothecare.ca IG: [@maisonapothecare](https://www.instagram.com/maisonapothecare)

11. BOTANICS ANTHEM is a skincare brand inspired by Madagascar's lush nature. Their debut product, the Baobab Night Serum, is a luxurious blend of baobab oil, prickly pear oil and jojoba oil. This serum moisturises the skin, giving a healthy-looking glow. Visit botanicsanthem.com IG: [@botanicsanthem](https://www.instagram.com/botanicsanthem)

12. Indulge in the innovative, multi-tasking hand cream by **BARRIER REMEDY**, an alcohol-free sanitising hand cream that helps to leave dry and cracked hands feeling soothed. Combining the benefits of a hand cream and a sanitiser, what more can your hands ask for? Enjoy 10% off with code VANITYFAIR10 at barrierremedy.com (expires 17/10/23) and follow [@barrierremedy](https://www.instagram.com/barrierremedy) on IG.

13. Reveal nature's treasures with **LUX GLOW SKIN CARE**. Experience the botanical beauty revolution with their Vegan Vitamin C Serum and Hydrating Moisturizer, a harmonious blend designed to nourish with moisture and leave your skin appearing radiant. The look of glowing skin awaits. Visit luxglowskincare.com IG: [@luxglowskincareco](https://www.instagram.com/luxglowskincareco)

14. Introducing **OSMOND SAINT SKINCARE**, a boutique beauty and wellness brand born in Australia and created by founder Jelena Jacobs. All products are made using the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, using only the finest quality natural Australian and French ingredients. Featured is the Marine Collagen Hydrating Serum that aims to leave skin feeling soothed and hydrated with a glowing appearance. Visit osmondsaint.com IG: [@osmondsaintskin](https://www.instagram.com/osmondsaintskin)

15. YOUTHLAB's ProSculpt takes your Gua Sha skincare routine to the next level by adding the benefits of Heat 42°C (113°F), Vibration (8,000 rpm) and Red Light (630nm). It helps to leave your face, neck and jaw muscles feeling relaxed and appearing de-puffed and sculpted. Available on Amazon, visit youthlabradiance.com IG: [@youth.lab.radiance](https://www.instagram.com/youth.lab.radiance)

16. KORO GAIA's No Spa Facial is designed to help unlock the look of radiant and hydrated skin. It contains copper peptide, niacinamide and hyaluronic acid, infused with African botanical extracts. This serum helps to target the appearance of hyperpigmentation and fine lines. The perfect addition to any beauty routine. Visit korogaia.com IG: [@korogaia](https://www.instagram.com/korogaia)

17. Discover the TikTok viral QuickLash System from **AMOR LASHES**. Their vegan at-home lash extensions provide up to seven days of wear and can be applied from the comfort of your own home. Discover their range of styles and lengths at amorlashes.co.uk IG and Tiktok: [@amorlashesuk](https://www.instagram.com/amorlashesuk)

18. Unlock the benefits of saffron with the Brightening Saffron Elixir Serum from **DEWDROP SKINCARE™**, a must-have in the world of Ayurveda! This precious serum aims to leave skin visibly glowing and it has a combination of nutrient-rich superfoods. Join the Ayurvedic skincare revolution today! Visit dewdropskincare.co.za IG: [@dewdrop_skincare](https://www.instagram.com/dewdrop_skincare)

19. Indulge in the epitome of skincare opulence with **EQUILABO** Intensive Repairing Rich Cream. Elevate your beauty ritual with this lavish elixir. Crafted with the finest plant extracts and infused with precious natural fatty oils and vitamins. This formula moisturises, leaving you with a radiant looking glow. Perfect for day and night use. Visit equilabolondon.com IG: [@equilabolondon](https://www.instagram.com/equilabolondon)

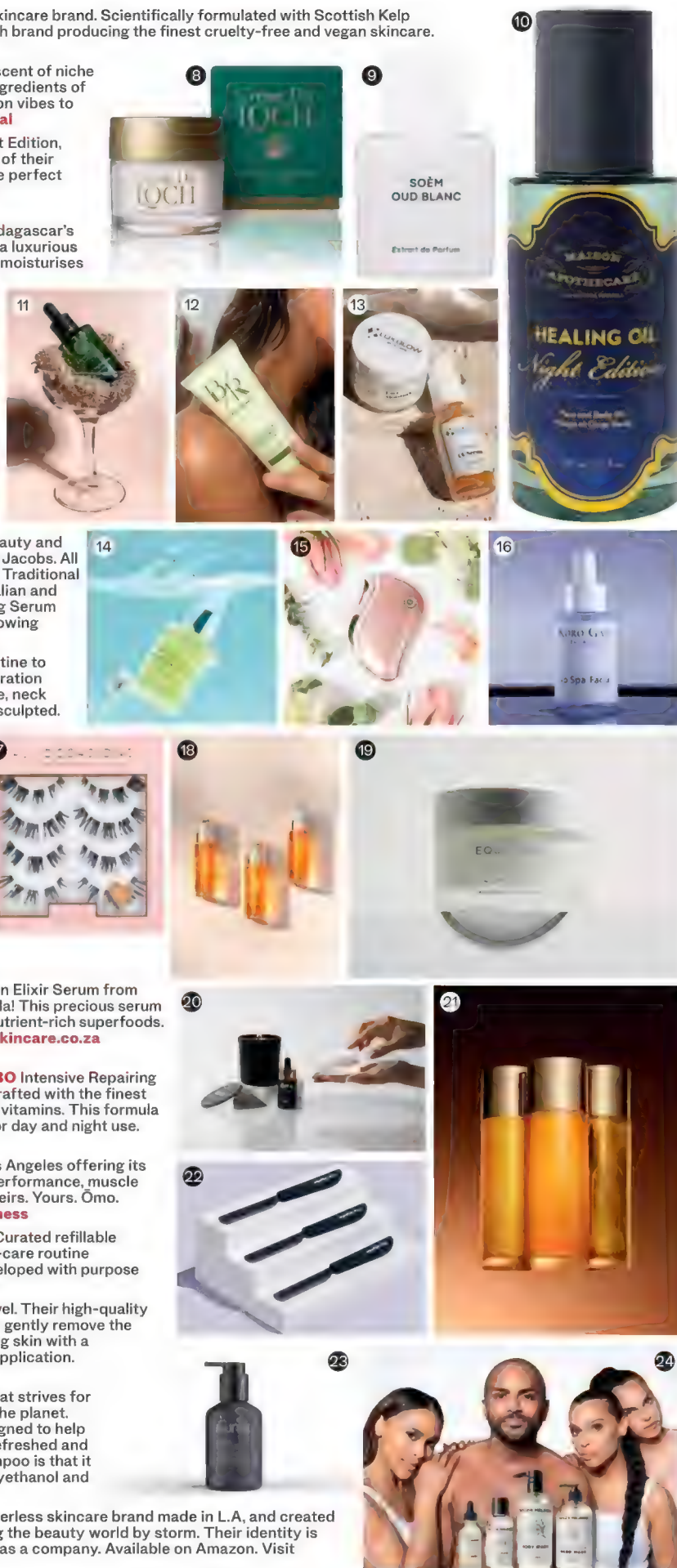
20. ÔMO WELLNESS is a vegan wellness company from Los Angeles offering its premium quality, cannabinoid-infused products for athletic performance, muscle recovery, intimate wellness and private aviation. His. Hers. Theirs. Yours. Ômo. Find harmony in Oneness. Visit omowell.com IG: [@omo_wellness](https://www.instagram.com/omo_wellness)

21. Artisanal luxury wellness essentials by **CHSLDBEAUTY**. Curated refillable self-care solutions for everyone's everyday. Disrupt your self-care routine with Elevate, Empower & Evolve, The Trinity Body Oil Set. Developed with purpose and transparency. Visit chsldebeauty.co IG: [@chsldebeauty](https://www.instagram.com/chsldebeauty)

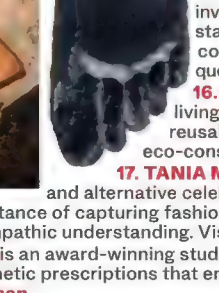
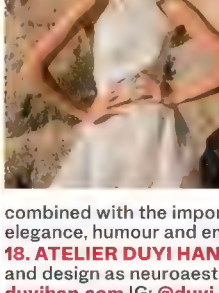
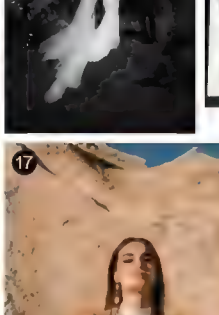
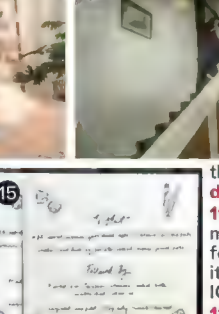
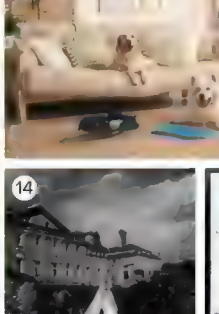
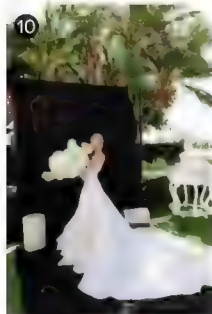
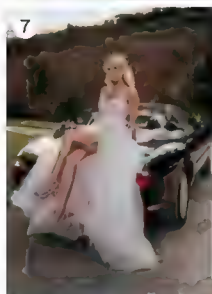
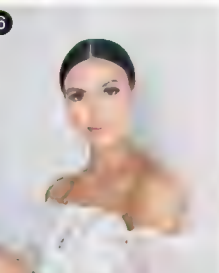
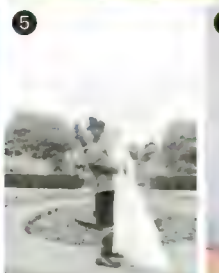
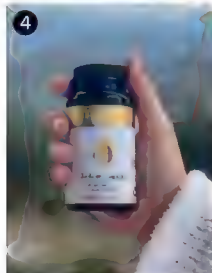
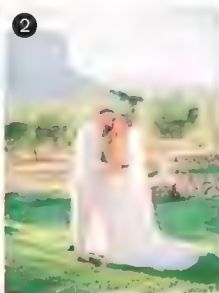
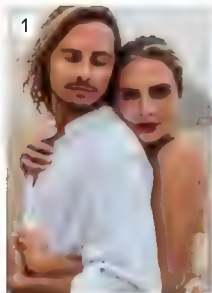
22. SMOOTHIE STICK takes at-home skincare to the next level. Their high-quality and easy to use stainless steel dermaplaning kit is designed to gently remove the appearance of peach fuzz and lightly exfoliate the skin, leaving skin with a smooth-looking base for an enhanced skincare and makeup application. Visit smoothiestick.com IG: [@smoothie.stick](https://www.instagram.com/smoothie.stick)

23. Based in Switzerland, **NUNIQ** is a vegan haircare brand that strives for a world where having great looking hair doesn't compromise the planet. Featured is their Planet Pleaser Detox Shampoo which is designed to help remove product-build up and impurities, leaving hair feeling refreshed and allowing it to breath between washes. The beauty of the shampoo is that it contains no nasties, including microbeads, parabens, phenoxyethanol and triclosan. Visit nuniq.io IG: [@nuniq.io](https://www.instagram.com/nuniq.io)

24. Ready, Set, Glow with **TAYLOR MELROSE**, a luxury genderless skincare brand made in L.A, and created by founder Skylar Taylor. Discover the emerging brand, taking the beauty world by storm. Their identity is woven into their intersectionality, diversity and social impact as a company. Available on Amazon. Visit taylormelrosebeauty.com IG: [@taylormelrosela](https://www.instagram.com/taylormelrosela)



The Lifestyle List



1. The luxurious aesthetic merges with understated beauty and culminates in a celebration of style. **MARRYBYLEN**, a Wedding Planner and Event Designer, curates chic, cool, and unforgettable events in Europe. These events are meticulously tailored to the visions of their multicultural clients, who place their trust in the team's professional and stylish approach. Visit marrybylen.com IG: [@marrybylen](https://www.instagram.com/marrybylen)

2. Introducing **PHILIPP TIMPERT**, a highly respected Ibiza and Mallorca based fine art wedding photographer. Known for his impeccable ability to capture the most intimate and heart-warming moments, Philipp's photography style exudes elegance, timelessness, and authenticity. With his extensive experience, he is wholeheartedly committed to preserving your love story for eternity. Entrust your special day to Philipp Timpert, where wedding photography becomes a true masterpiece. Planner: @lovebirdsmaiorca - visit philipp timpert.com IG: [@philipp timpert](https://www.instagram.com/philipp timpert)

3. **SWALÖ CERAMICS** series of striking, sculptural, hand-made Swan Gourd vases is an elegant exploration of the ability for objects and form to convey emotion and awareness through their relationship and association with each other. Visit swaloc ceramics.com.au IG: [@swaloc ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/swaloc ceramics)

4. Choline is a new supplement which is designed to target the look of your hair and the normal function of your metabolism and cognitive function. Brought to you by **PURERVITA**, a novel supplement company which produces products based on scientific levels of action. Founded by doctors, they are here to help revolutionise the nutritional vitamin world using superfoods in their award-winning ranges. Visit purermama.co.uk IG: [@purermama](https://www.instagram.com/purermama)

5. **JILL CHERRY PORTER** is a multi-award winning, luxury destination wedding photographer, listed in the UK's TOP 100. She is renowned for her ease and warmth whilst delicately capturing emotive, timeless, storytelling photography full of light and romance. Visit jillcherryporterphotography.com IG: [@jillcherryporterphotography](https://www.instagram.com/jillcherryporterphotography)

6. **MEGAN KAY** is an international fashion, lifestyle, and wedding photographer. Her editorial eye and warm demeanour helps her connect with clients to create work that beautifully meshes art and emotion. Visit megankayphotography.com IG: [@megankayphotography](https://www.instagram.com/megankayphotography)

7. **PS VISUALS** are wedding film-makers based in the UK that make couple's stories come to life all over Europe. Their style is editorial and candid. Documenting the most insane luxury weddings all year round, they aim to capture everything a wedding day can offer and freeze it in timeless films. Visit psvideography.com IG: [@p.s.visuals](https://www.instagram.com/p.s.visuals)

8. Luxury design studio, **INKETCH**, creates stylish wedding signs, décor and stationery for both UK and destination weddings. Working closely with couples, the experienced and reliable team offer full bespoke, personalised packages with every item handmade and designed in house to ensure impeccable quality. From acrylic signs to signature drink stirrers, drink tags and more, visit inketch.com IG: [@inketch.weddings](https://www.instagram.com/inketch.weddings)

9. **RIPTIDE CANDLE CO.** Bring the holiday spirit to your home with this beautiful Fraser fir scented candle. Its reminiscence of the holidays will fill your home with an evergreen aroma thanks to the added essential oils. Create long-lasting holiday memories. Visit riptidecandleco.com IG: [@riptidecandleco](https://www.instagram.com/riptidecandleco)

10. With a decade of experience, **DANILO AND SHARON** have become highly sought-after wedding photographers known for their distinct blend of fashion and love stories. Explore their stunning portfolio at daniloandsharon.com IG: [@daniloandsharon](https://www.instagram.com/daniloandsharon)

11. Introducing **SUPER FEEDY**'s 4-in-1 Slow Feeder Dog Bowl: where innovation meets elegance in canine dining. Meticulously crafted, this bowl isn't just about feeding; it's an experience. From its reversible lick mat to its travel-friendly design, it's the epitome of luxury for the modern dog owner. Visit superfeedy.com IG: [@superfeedy](https://www.instagram.com/superfeedy)

12. **SHARI LINDENBERGER** is an international photographer based in Germany. Shari is a rare find in such a vast world. She's a dreamer that results in dreamy, romantic and artistic imagery. Available in Europe and travelling worldwide. Visit sharilindenberg.com IG: [@shari.lindenberg](https://www.instagram.com/shari.lindenberg)

13. **WEDDINGS WITH ELIZABETH TAYLOR** is a bespoke, luxury wedding planning service founded by Claire Elizabeth Taylor. With a passion for perfection, the mother and daughter duo create highly stylised, timeless celebrations with impeccable attention to detail, combined with a modern and contemporary twist. With a love for design, the personable team pride themselves on delivering nothing short of a monumental experience. Visit weddingswithelizabethtaylor.com IG: [@weddingswithelizabethtaylor](https://www.instagram.com/weddingswithelizabethtaylor)

14. Based in Edinburgh, **RIBBONS & ROSE** operates throughout Scotland as an established wedding planner who creates high-end weddings. Their mission is to plan, design and create bold and modern unforgettable weddings. Owners Natalie McIntyre and Danielle Somerville are specialists in venue styling and bridal florals, with over 13 years floristry experience. Visit ribbonsandroseltd.com IG: [@ribbonsandroseltd](https://www.instagram.com/ribbonsandroseltd)

15. The finest first impression for any celebration has to be a **NOUILLE DESIGN** invitation. A nod to the French moniker for 'noodle', the signature style of this bespoke stationery service evokes its namesake with delicate swirls of cursive in a clean, contemporary take on classic handwriting. Redeem a special offer of 10% off by quoting 'Vanity Fair' (expires 31/10/24). Visit nouilledesign.com IG: [@nouilledesign](https://www.instagram.com/nouilledesign)

16. **PIPET**, a Sydney-based eco start-up, is helping to lead the charge in sustainable living. Meticulously designing and ethically sourcing products like silicone food bags, reusable water bottles and wheat drinking straws, Pipet inspires a refined and eco-conscious lifestyle. Visit pipet.com.au IG: [@pipet_au](https://www.instagram.com/pipet_au)

17. **TANIA MURA** has a passion for capturing the beauty of weddings, intimate elopements, and alternative celebrations. Tania's Italian style and deep appreciation for the art of storytelling combined with the importance of capturing fashion within her images, helps her dedication in documenting couple's love with elegance, humour and empathic understanding. Visit taniamura.com IG: [@taniamuraphotography](https://www.instagram.com/taniamuraphotography)

18. **ATELIER DUYI HAN** is an award-winning studio specialising in avant-garde design. Chinese artist, Duyi Han, creates art and design as neuroaesthetic prescriptions that engage with art history, cultural charisma, psychology and emotion. Visit duyihan.com IG: [@duyihan](https://www.instagram.com/duyihan)

19. SARA ROBERTS HAIR specialises in chic, modern yet timeless, clean textured hairstyles, bespoke to every bride. Sara's goal is making sure her brides and their bridal party have dreamy wedding hair to walk down the aisle. Based in North Wales. Photo credit: Lowri Ellen Photography. Visit sara-robertshair.co.uk IG: [@sara-robertshair](https://www.instagram.com/sara-robertshair)

20. Do you struggle to lie on your stomach due to your breast area? BREASTEEZ PILLOWS have a new, game-changing, innovative design that aims to bring comfort to women everywhere. Their pillows are lightweight, versatile and provide support for all breasts - they're a self-care must have. Visit breasteez.com.au IG: [@breasteez_pillows](https://www.instagram.com/breasteez_pillows)

21. CORA NEUMÜLLER is a skilled wedding photographer who has a special focus on beauty and fashion photography. She creates captivating images that embody authenticity and timelessness. Her work exudes beauty, grace, and personal style, leaving a lasting impression on clients. Passionate and sensitive, she delivers breath-taking visuals that resonate deeply. Visit emoments-photography.com IG: [@emomentsweddings](https://www.instagram.com/emomentsweddings)

22. Transform your living space with FJORD AND FABLE's alluring scents, elevating it into refined luxury. Embrace the allure of minimalist aesthetics, complemented by the finest fragrances. Discover more at fjordandfable.com IG: [@fjordandfable](https://www.instagram.com/fjordandfable)

23. Introducing EVER YOU, an Australian luxury silk label. Their 100% high-grade Mulberry Silk products, bespoke designs, patterns and prints are designed in rural Australia and are proudly exclusive to the brand. Their pieces complement all bedroom décor and are made to stand out in a timeless, classic and uplifting way. Visit everyyou.com.au IG: [@_ever_you](https://www.instagram.com/_ever_you)

24. PHYLLOS CERAMICS specialises in handmade, small batch ceramics that are hand built from a home studio in London. The ceramics are based on original characters, designed to be endearing companions for daily life. Pieces are available to purchase online from phyllosceramics.com IG: [@phyllosceramics](https://www.instagram.com/phyllosceramics)

25. EMILY CHOY is a fine art destination photographer based in Hawaii, and available worldwide to capture couple's stories. She seamlessly blends an editorial style and a photojournalistic style, to tell a full story of the wedding day. Her couples love her passion for capturing artful and honest images with an emphasis on human connection that bring them right back to those moments. Her couple's days are captured with digital photography, 35mm film, and 120 film. Visit emilychoyphotography.com IG: [@_emilychoy](https://www.instagram.com/_emilychoy)

26. Discover the exquisite craftsmanship of PATCH & POPS. Handcrafted in Edinburgh, their BioThane® vegan leather products offer style and durability for both dogs and their owners. With over 40 vibrant colours and a variety of styles, these waterproof and easy-to-clean sets are guaranteed to capture your heart. Visit patchpops.com IG: [@patchpopsboutique](https://www.instagram.com/patchpopsboutique)

27. Blending sophistication, genuineness and a hint of stylish panache, ADRIAN OLIVER infuses an editorial essence into all his work. With a remarkable ability not only to capture images but to encapsulate moments, his undeniable talent transports you back to those precious memories. Photography by: sonberga - visit adrianoliverphotography.pixieset.com IG: [@adrianoliverphotographyexperience](https://www.instagram.com/adrianoliverphotographyexperience)

28. CANDASCENT LABS' MOJO diffuser blend and waterless diffuser bring the benefits of forest bathing into your home sanctuary, with lush notes of fresh balsam, black spruce and cypress. CandaScent Labs offers science-backed organic and synthetic-free fresh and sophisticated aromas. Harness the visible benefits of botanicals for your health and wellbeing. Visit candascent.com IG: [@candascent](https://www.instagram.com/candascent)

29. GABY RGUEZ PHOTOGRAPHY is a fine-art wedding photographer who focuses on capturing timeless bridal portraits. Her storytelling approach shows the authentic moments between a couple on their wedding day, and her directions focus clients towards genuine movements and ethereal moodiness. Visit gabyrguezphotography.com IG: [@bahamasphotographer](https://www.instagram.com/bahamasphotographer)

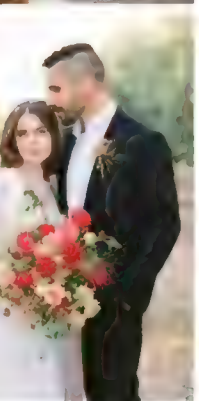
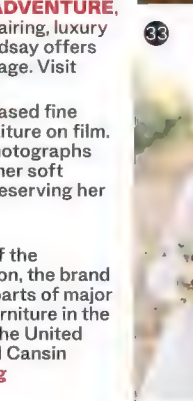
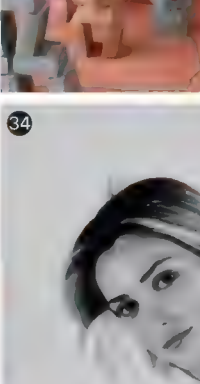
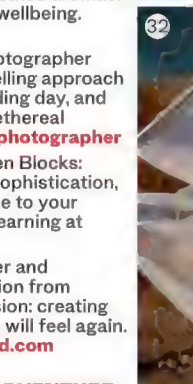
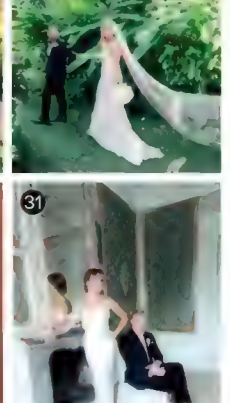
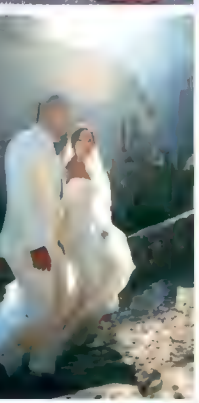
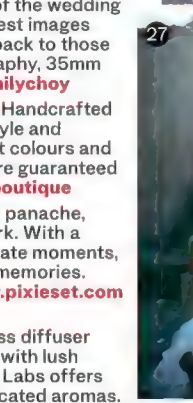
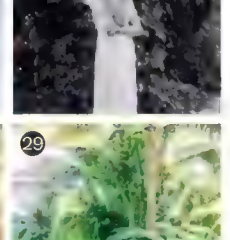
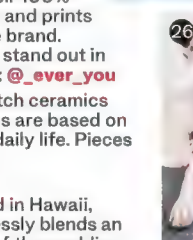
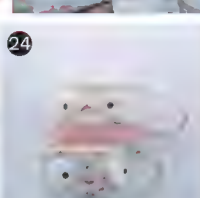
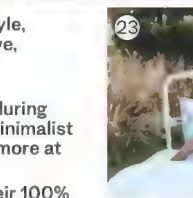
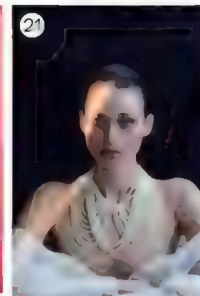
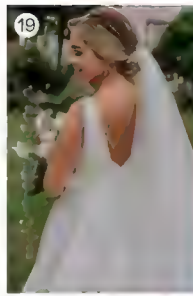
30. Elevate playtime with THE TEA CLUB's Chocolate Wooden Blocks: Where imagination meets design. Crafted with precision and sophistication, these blocks inspire creativity while adding a touch of elegance to your child's world. Experience the perfect blend of aesthetics and learning at theteaclubtoys.com IG: [@theteaclubtoys](https://www.instagram.com/theteaclubtoys)

31. HASSAN HADAD is an editorial and wedding photographer and filmmaker with a unique style and perspective. Taking inspiration from films, fashion and music, Hassan strives to create art. His mission: creating photographs and films that evoke memories and emotions you will feel again. Based in Germany and available worldwide. Visit hassanhadad.com IG: [@_hassanhadad_](https://www.instagram.com/_hassanhadad_)

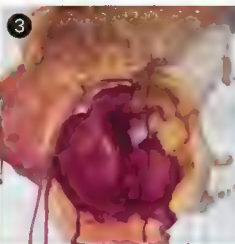
32. Based in Oregon, USA and beyond, TILL DEATH DO WE ADVENTURE, is a wedding and elopement photographer that specialises in pairing, luxury and adventure. With over six years in the wedding industry, Lindsay offers a timeless feel to her photography that draws you into each image. Visit tilldeathdoweadventure.com IG: [@tilldeathdoweadventure](https://www.instagram.com/tilldeathdoweadventure)

33. TIFFANY LE PHOTOGRAPHY is a Northern California based fine art photographer with a passion for capturing timeless portraiture on film. Inspired by nature's beauty, she creates the most painterly photographs with a romantic feel and ethereal aesthetic. She is known for her soft colours and capturing the most breath-taking lighting while preserving her client's stories through film imagery. Visit tiffanylephotography.com IG: [@tiffanylephotography](https://www.instagram.com/tiffanylephotography)

34. ETHNIK LIVING - Changing the world's understanding of the mirrors at the age of 24. After their first design mirrors collection, the brand became one of the leaders in the industry. Ethnik's pieces are parts of major hotel renovations, Michelin guide restaurants and feature as furniture in the stores of high-end brands, along with thousands of homes in the United States. Co-Founder and Creative Director of Ethnik Living, Izel Cansin features in the photo. Visit ethnikliving.com IG: [@ethnikliving](https://www.instagram.com/ethnikliving)



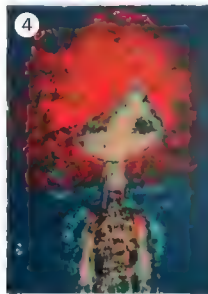
Hall Of Frames



1. EVA RICHARDSON is a Montreal-based artist. Inspired by the landscape, her work explores light, texture and memories of places where she has lived and travelled. Eva's paintings have been exhibited nationally and internationally and can be seen at evarichardson.ca and [@eva.richardson.art](https://www.instagram.com/eva.richardson.art) on IG.

2. BORN AND RAISED IN CALIFORNIA, VISUAL ARTIST SYDNI PEELER, has spent almost two decades travelling as an Aviation Professional. Her exposure to different traditions has inspired her to convey diversity in her work, through her unique cultural lens. Visit studiosydni.com IG: [@plane_visions](https://www.instagram.com/plane_visions)

3. LORI TATREAU creates paintings and drawings by mixing many mediums and textures. She uses abstract forms as stand-ins for emotions, body parts, people or landscapes trying to interact but often alienated from each other. Visit loritatreau.com IG: [@loritatreaustudio](https://www.instagram.com/loritatreaustudio)

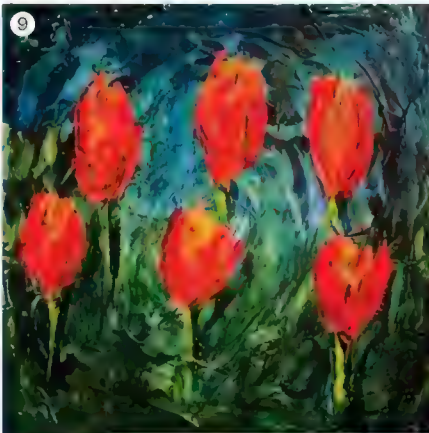
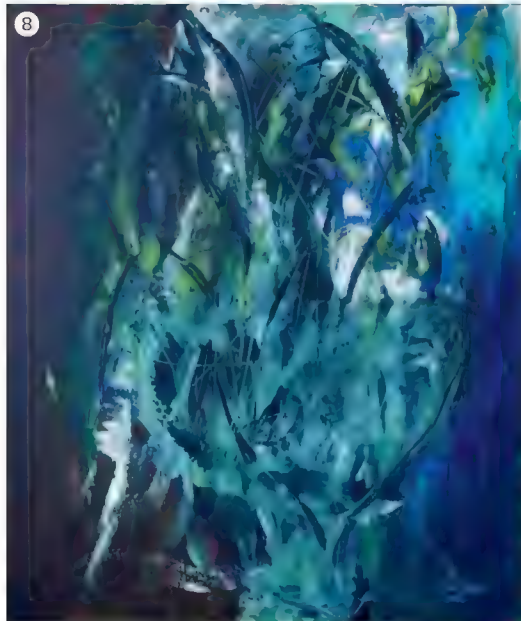


4. EVA HIDALGO is an artist whose journey from Granada to Genève to England has shaped her unique perspective. Now residing in Germany as a freelance artist, she aims to evoke profound emotions through her work, letting the colours and strokes speak for themselves. Experience her paintings and immerse in their depth of emotion at evahidalgo.com and IG: [@hidalgoevah](https://www.instagram.com/hidalgoevah)

5. BRIDGET WEISER is a self-taught contemporary artist based in Los Angeles, California. Through layers of accrued oil and acrylic paints, her striking and vivid work creates a space for the viewer to draw inferences from the architecture of their imaginations Visit bridgetweiserartwork.com IG: [@b.weiser](https://www.instagram.com/b.weiser)

6. HANNAH BLAKE is a fine artist who specialises in watercolour, oil painting and bespoke luxury wedding stationery design. She transfers her watercolour paintings onto invitations using the most decadent, sustainably sourced card to create bespoke pieces of work for special occasions. Visit hannahblakeart.com IG: [@hannahblakeart](https://www.instagram.com/hannahblakeart)

7. IAN ARCHIE BECK paints the effects of urban light. He is inspired by the houses, gardens, trees, flowers and interiors of West London where he lives. He is fascinated by the fall of light at different times of day and at different seasons. His work can be seen at ianarchiebeck.co.uk and [@ianarchiebeck](https://www.instagram.com/ianarchiebeck) on IG.



8. JOHN VEALE is an abstract expressionist painter, living in Ibiza. His work reveals creative vibrancy, bold use of colour with physical unplanned energy and movement. He has found the freedom to create artwork that is courageous, emotional and passionate. Visit ibizaartist.com and IG: [@jinibiza](https://www.instagram.com/jinibiza)

9. LIVING IN TORONTO CANADA WITH HER TWO CHILDREN, SHARN BASSI is a self taught abstract artist. Since childhood Sharn has felt most comfortable outdoors and so, her work explores the connection between all living things in the natural world. Visit sharnbassi.com IG: [@sharn1978](https://www.instagram.com/sharn1978)



10. LORETTA YUSSUFF is a British Nigerian-Lithuanian self-taught painter from Brixton, South London. She creates her figurative works using oil paints on canvas, bringing to life figures from her community using rhythm, colour, skill and intuition. Visit lorettayussuff.vsble.me IG: [@lorettayussuff](https://www.instagram.com/lorettayussuff)

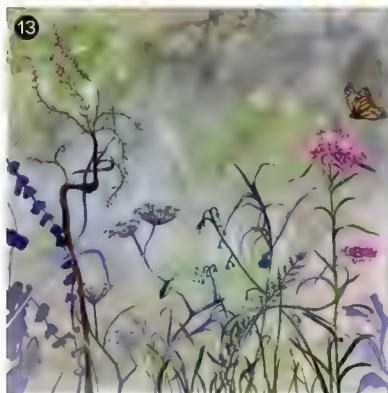
11. PATRICK KEEFE is a Brooklyn-based artist who uses a unique impasto oil painting technique to create his abstract compositions. His practice explores themes related to world building, self-determination, and personal relationships. Visit keefe-studio.com IG: [@keefe_studio](https://www.instagram.com/keefe_studio)

12. PATRICK SCHMIDT's paintings are hard edged colour fields with a digital sensibility that explore the language of geometric abstraction. He believes colour is political, logical, scientific, and manipulates our perception of space and depth. Visit patrickschmidtstudio.com IG: [@pschmidt61](https://www.instagram.com/pschmidt61)

13. NANCY HILLIARD JOYCE is a contemporary, semi-abstract painter, based in North Carolina. She paints recurrent themes of untrammelled garden settings, peppered with botanicals and freedom-filled bird and pollinator imagery. Her work is widely collected throughout the world in boutique hotels, homes and corporate spaces. Visit nancyjoycegallery.com IG: [@nancyjoyceart](https://www.instagram.com/nancyjoyceart)

14. FOR LYDIA MAKIN, painting is inherently cathartic. Her practice is demanding, both emotionally and physically. Keeping the paint wet and flexible, moving her body in dramatic, all-encompassing gestures. She manifests a vision of continuous motion and liveliness upon the canvas. Visit lydiamakin.com IG: [@lydiamakinart](https://www.instagram.com/lydiamakinart)

15. JOJO HUXFORD is an award-winning artist from Westport, Connecticut. Her vibrant, expressive paintings are powerful and dynamic, full of colour and texture. Her oeuvre, which includes many portraits, covers a variety of styles from the surreal to the abstract and impressionistic. Featured is her piece 'Raven'. Visit nantucketphotos.photography IG: [@jojohuxford2](https://www.instagram.com/jojohuxford2)



16. BENEDETTA BELLONI is an Italian artist from Milan. By burning waxes, pigments, and oxides onto large panels, she allows her work to acquire a newfound expressiveness where the materials' imperfections merge into a unique alchemy. Visit benedettabelloni.com and IG: [@benedetta_belloni_official](https://www.instagram.com/benedetta_belloni_official)

17. LARA IVANOVIĆ came across an old opal mining town. It was a strange, barren area with abandoned cars and machinery littered in the landscape. She found this car rather amusing as it was missing several tyres and a "spare" one was nearby. She conveys the desolation of the scene with drybrush painting techniques. Visit laraivanovic.com IG: [@lara_ivanovic_artist](https://www.instagram.com/lara_ivanovic_artist)

18. HAILEY LINDSAY is an abstract artist based in San Francisco, California. She specialises in impasto painting with an emphasis in colour and texture. Hailey practices sustainability by reusing dried acrylic paint from her palette. You can find a face in nearly every one of her pieces. Visit hlindsayart.com and [@hlindsay.art](https://www.instagram.com/hlindsay.art) on IG.

19. ELENA GERASIMOVA is a Latvian-based artist who crafts mesmerising abstracts, portraits and icons. With her mastery of different paint mediums, she has showcased her works in exhibitions and online galleries with widespread recognition. Infused with spiritual essence and inspired by the wonders of nature, her artwork brings divine serenity to any interior. Visit elena-gerasimova.com and IG: [@artist_elena_gerasimova](https://www.instagram.com/artist_elena_gerasimova)

20. BONNIE CZEGLIEDI is a Canadian multi-media visual artist and watercolourist. Inspired by the beauty of natural landscapes, the interplay of colours and light, and the enchanting melodies of lyrical music, her vibrant works capture the essence of joy and happiness. Email czegledi@artlaw.ca and visit czeglediartlaw.ca online.

21. ROSIE TRETTER is a self-taught artist living near Stuttgart, Germany. In her colourful artwork she expresses the beauty and transience of nature and wildlife whilst also depicting their destructive quality. Find her on saatchiart.com visit rosie-tretter.com IG: [@rosietretter.art](https://www.instagram.com/rosietretter.art)

22. GABRIELA MADRAZO is a self-taught artist who starts from intuition, restlessness and personal essence for the sake of connecting with the spectator from an unprejudiced space. She creates harmony by playing with the tension between the material, the layers and the overlaying of amorphous plasters of colour and pigment. Visit gabrielamadrazo.com IG: [@gabriela.madrazo](https://www.instagram.com/gabriela.madrazo)

23. CAROLINA BENAVIDEZ is an Uruguayan artist, based in the Arizona desert. In her paintings she explores the interconnectivity between people and with nature while aiming to achieve the full expression of the watercolour medium. Carolina is currently working on a series of energetic portraits inspired by the divine feminine. Visit carolinabenavidezart.com IG: [@carolinabenavidezart](https://www.instagram.com/carolinabenavidezart)

24. LORAN THRASHER developed his love of painting young, immersing himself in the paintings of the Impressionists and Post Impressionists/Expressionists. Now living and creating in Dallas, Texas, Thrasher is producing 3D 'relief paintings' as well as 2D works. Visit loranthrasherartwork.com IG: [@loranthrasherartwork](https://www.instagram.com/loranthrasherartwork)

25. SUSAN LIZOTTE is a Los Angeles based contemporary artist, has exhibited her works both in the US and internationally. Her pieces flow and unfold themselves as you study them, drawing you in with their bold colours and brushstrokes. Visit susanlizotte.com IG: [@susanlizotte](https://www.instagram.com/susanlizotte)

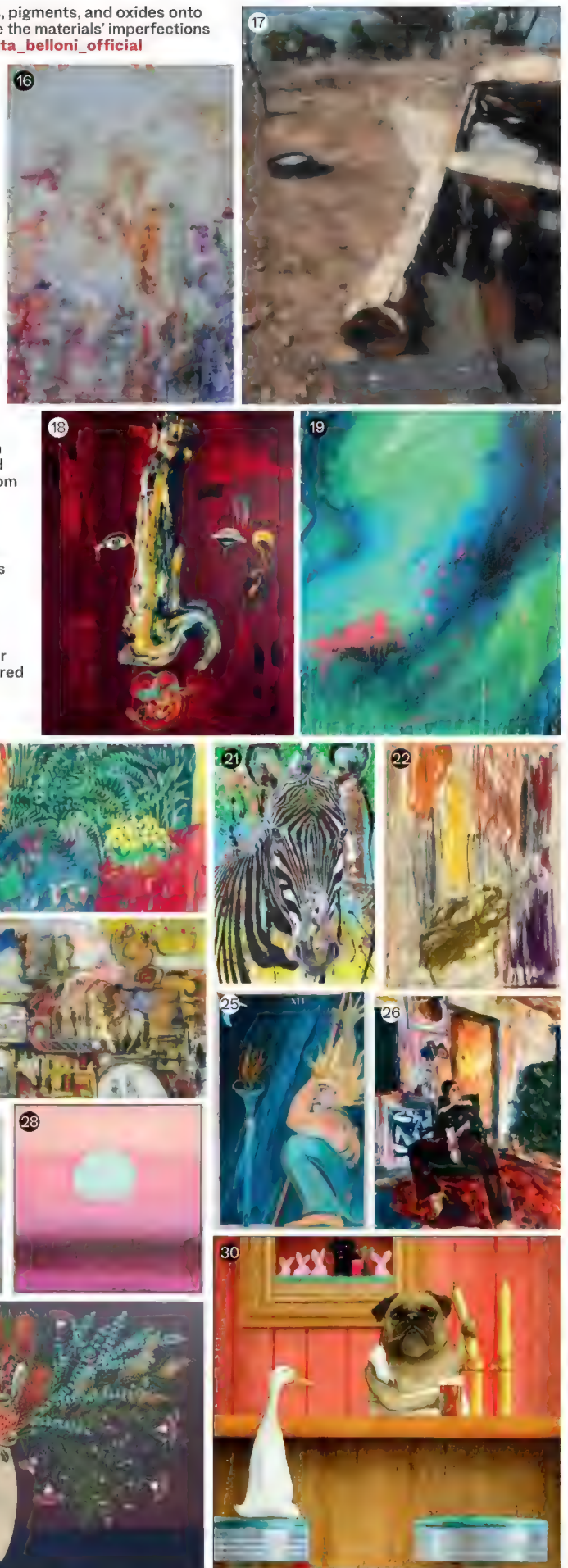
26. ALI HUNTER is a York-based artist who produces pen and ink paintings and drawings, inspired by interiors, fashion and décor. Her 'Quarinteriors' series, inspired by Covid-19, aims to capture themes of loneliness, self-love and care. Ali has recently exhibited in York, Liverpool and Lincoln and her original works and prints are available for purchase online. Email alihillustration@gmail.com and IG: [@alihunter_](https://www.instagram.com/alihunter_)

27. MARIE MANON CORBEIL, an established international artist who pours her passion into each brushstroke, creating compositions that speak to the heart. Drawing strength from her life experiences, she infuses her art with the power of personal growth and resilience. Visit mariemanon.com IG: [@mariemanon.art](https://www.instagram.com/mariemanon.art)

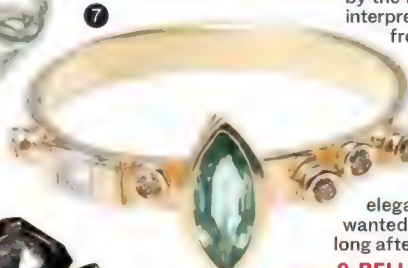
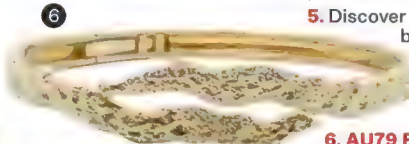
28. KELLY STYNE is an LA based abstract and pop artist. Through her work, using acrylic and mixed media on canvas, Kelly fuses order and chaos, boldness and subtlety - all with an underlying graceful tension that is representative of her personal style. Visit kellystynart.com IG: [@kellystynart](https://www.instagram.com/kellystynart)

29. KERA BRUTON is an emerging Australian contemporary artist. Her current artworks are a modern, fun and playful take on still life. She uses heavy texture, colour and composition to explore the unique and robust forms of native Australian flora. Visit kerabruton.com IG: [@kerabruton](https://www.instagram.com/kerabruton)

30. WILL BULLAS, watercolour by internationally acclaimed California artist. He is a signature member of both American and National Watercolor Societies. Surreal humorous narratives are the core of his appeal with collectors. Search Will Bullas on saatchiart.com visit willbullas.com, IG: [@will_bullas](https://www.instagram.com/will_bullas)



Opulent Jewels



1. EYECANDY LA believes in the freedom to express yourself with no limits, encouraging you to play with trends and try new things. Here to complete your look, for every occasion, every mood, every day. Whether you're a minimalist or maximalist, their diverse assortment of jewellery has something for everyone. Visit eyecandyla.com IG: [@eyecandylosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/eyecandylosangeles)

2. AVIKA. Created with a great passion for design, this Thai-jewellery brand offers its customers chic and classy pieces made from various types of pearls. Their products are timeless, elegant and suitable for every occasion. Visit a-vi-ka.com IG: [@jewellery.avika](https://www.instagram.com/jewellery.avika)

3. SPERO LONDON is a London-based jewellery brand that only offers high-quality, sustainable and handmade 925 sterling silver jewellery. The brand offers meaningful and stylish effortless everyday jewellery to be worn with love and gifted too. All collections are handcrafted by some of the best manufacturers from around the world in their specialties. Visit sperolondon.com IG: [@sperolondon](https://www.instagram.com/sperolondon)

4. Founded by Char Sidney, **THE WANDERING JEWEL** meticulously creates a beautiful range of jewellery pieces, for women who aren't afraid to break out of the female expectations of society. The brand is back with their Disengagement Ring, this time in a septagon shape which features seven diamonds around the band with seven clustered into a septagon flower. Made for those as a present of self reflection. Visit thewanderingjewel.com IG: [@thewanderingjewel7](https://www.instagram.com/thewanderingjewel7)

5. Discover the essence of individuality with **OLITE:** drawing inspiration from the body, soul, and nature. Each creation, like it's destined owner, carries a narrative of its own. Embrace the beauty of imperfection and own a piece that resonates with your uniqueness – an emblem of stories woven into precious metal and gemstones. Visit: olite.com.mx IG: [@oliteoficial__](https://www.instagram.com/oliteoficial__)

6. AU79 FINE JEWELLERY's meaningfully designed pieces are often inspired by the founder's childhood on the coast of a tiny island. Their Wave Bangle is their interpretation of waves wrapping around your wrist, a snapshot of the rough seas, crafted from 14K yellow gold. Visit au79finejewellery.com IG: [@au79finejewellery](https://www.instagram.com/au79finejewellery)

7. NAGUY KASHANE designs pure and contemporary lines. Her organic production makes her work authentic and precious. This collection offers an oriental fragrance of timeless elegance for any woman wishing to reveal her universal beauty. Visit naguykashane.com IG: [@naguykashane_jewellery](https://www.instagram.com/naguykashane_jewellery)

8. Founded by Ileana Djubic, **FOXY PEARL JEWELRY** was born out of her love and passion for jewellery as an art form, specifically the intricacy of pearls. Pearls are multi-dimensional and communicate numerous meanings; they are elegant, classic, playful and striking. These adjectives inspire her designs. She also wanted to bring to life a brand that offers beautiful and distinctive designs that will last long after the season is over. Visit foxypearljewelry.com IG: [@foxy_pearl_jewelry](https://www.instagram.com/foxy_pearl_jewelry)

9. BELLA SHERBAN is redefining elegance through her exquisite jewellery. The breathtaking "Toi et Moi" ring, crafted with a salt and pepper diamond and a white teardrop sapphire, perfectly embodies both uniqueness and sophistication. Explore more of Bella's designs at bellasherban.shop IG: [@bellasherban](https://www.instagram.com/bellasherban)

10. ANNE X JOSEPH is a luxury accessories brand, specialising in bespoke jewellery which incorporates high-quality gold-filled chains, freshwater pearls, crystals and more. Founder and Designer, Daniele Klien, states that each piece is made for the person who exudes class, style, confidence, and sophistication. Visit annexjoseph.com IG: [@annexjoseph](https://www.instagram.com/annexjoseph)

11. KIWAMI JEWELRY was founded in 2012 inspired by Buddhism, Zen, Asian philosophy and Japanese tattoo designs. Meticulously designed and handcrafted jewellery brand based out of Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. Visit kiwamijewelry.com IG: [@kiwamijewelry](https://www.instagram.com/kiwamijewelry)

12. COCOATEMYSHOES, a female and Jewish-owned jewellery brand handcrafted in Los Angeles by Amanda Tankel. Named after her bunny Coco, Amanda's designs draw inspiration from the complex emotions of love, heartbreak and rage, resulting in bold, striking pieces that empower and challenge the norm. Visit cocoatemyshoes.com IG: [@cocoatemyshoes](https://www.instagram.com/cocoatemyshoes)

13. CLOVER PATCH creates demi-fine elegance with a touch of whimsy. Inspired by flowers and the colours of nature, each piece is designed for your romantic side. Upcycled and vintage materials are used to produce timeless jewellery you will treasure for years, beautifully gift-wrapped in handmade paper. Visit cloverpatchjewelry.com IG: [@cloverpatchjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/cloverpatchjewelry)

14. PAOLO A MODERN JEWELER creates remarkable custom-designed jewellery and vintage redesigns. Featured are their Diamond Split Bar Earrings, handcrafted by their Master Jeweller in 14k yellow gold. Designed by Paolo A Modern Jeweler with a modern, classic design by Italian Traditionalists. One of Cincinnati's preferred private jewellers for over 30 years. Visit paolousa.com IG: [@paoloamodernjeweler](https://www.instagram.com/paoloamodernjeweler)

15. PEUT-ÊTRE explores the idea that charms are capable of sparking sentimentality and significant meaning. Their jewellery can be more than just a physical object, but also a symbol of hope, luck and protection. Made from recycled silver with rhodium and gold-plating. Visit peutetreby.com IG: [@peutetreby](https://www.instagram.com/peutetreby)

16. DVPE SOUL black woman owned and inspired by spirituality and soul. They specialise in minimalist jewellery that still makes a statement, versatile enough to wear everyday but bold enough to elevate any night out look. Featured are their beautiful Diamanté Hoop Earrings. Visit dvpesoul.com IG: [@iamdvpesoul](https://www.instagram.com/@iamdvpesoul)

17. CROWN AND CARAT are a mother-and-daughter-run custom jewellery business, based in Toronto and shipping worldwide. They have over 35 years of experience within Crown and Carat, with a focus on custom jewellery, specialising in engagement rings, custom pieces and fine jewellery. They find a sense of fulfilment and gratitude from being a part of their client's special day, custom-making their pieces from start to finish. Visit crownandcarat.com IG: [@crownandcarat](https://www.instagram.com/@crownandcarat)

18. HARPER JEWELRY prides itself in creating the ultimate solution for a stacked look without the tangling. Their Herringbone Stacking Chain is crafted with multiple chains but only one clasp, allowing you to effortlessly layer with ease and confidence. Visit harperjewelryco.com IG: [@harperjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/harperjewelry)

19. LE MARSHAND from Mallorca creates high-quality gold plated jewellery in 18 karats. The "Cruz Sevilla" earrings [285€] are perfect to refine any look and make you feel spectacular. Visit lemarshand.com IG: [@lemarshand](https://www.instagram.com/lemarshand)

20. Introducing **GEMSA**, a London-based jewellery brand which creates beautiful pieces designed to empower women. Featured are their Good Vibes Malachite Hoop Earrings, crafted with 18-karat gold vermeil, natural Malachite and ethically sourced recycled sterling silver. Visit gemsa.co.uk IG: [@theofficialgemsa](https://www.instagram.com/theofficialgemsa)

21. Las Vegas-based brand **EARTH SAGE JEWELRY** was created to honour spirituality. They have three stunning collections: Talisman, Secret Garden, and Earth Stone, each created using the lost wax casting method. Visit earthsagejewelry.com IG: [@earthsagejewelry](https://www.instagram.com/earthsagejewelry)

22. NIJI, a Swiss-made brand, designed by Salomé Balli, unveils its 1st collection. Seven personalisable, ethereal and feminine creations with all the colours of the rainbow. Made using recycled gold, laboratory diamonds and sapphires. Ethical jewels, made on demand, just for you. Visit niji-jewels.com IG: [@niji-jewels](https://www.instagram.com/niji-jewels)

23. Based in Vienna and Los Angeles, **ZETERE** artisanal pieces are not only stunning but also ethical and mindful. They achieve their signature designs using lab grown diamonds and gemstones. With an unwavering commitment to excellent craftsmanship, each exquisite creation is a testament to dedication and passion. Visit zetera.com IG: [@zetera.official](https://www.instagram.com/zetera.official)

24. JEWELS BY JESS is an affordable handmade jewellery brand dedicated to creating jewellery with meaning. Using a range of gold filled and sterling silver quality materials with freshwater pearls to produce dainty, elegant pieces including personalised birth flower rings. Visit jewelsbyjess.co.uk IG: [@jewelsbyjess](https://www.instagram.com/jewelsbyjess)

25. MIDORI JEWELRY CO. is a female-owned jewellery brand where sustainable craftsmanship meets timeless elegance. Midori's pieces are handcrafted with high-quality materials, including ethically-sourced gemstones, lustrous freshwater pearls, and recycled gold. Bringing versatility and femininity to its beloved wearers, Midori encourages them to embrace their unique stories and cherished moments. Visit midorijewelry.co IG: [@midorijewelry](https://www.instagram.com/midorijewelry)

26. SAM ST. AUBYN is dedicated to crafting stunning jewellery that exudes confidence and empowerment. The brand believes jewellery is fluid in gender, and should be used by everyone to express themselves through both beautiful and meaningful pieces. Also, in an effort to move away from the throw-away culture, the brand uses recycled metals and ethically sourced gemstones in their creations, working towards a more sustainable future. Visit samstaubyn.com IG: [@sam_st_aubyn](https://www.instagram.com/sam_st_aubyn)

27. SONYA K blends luxury and versatility to create wearable, timeless fine jewellery pieces for the modern woman. This one-of-a-kind jewel is crafted around a vibrant lagoon-coloured tourmaline that is surrounded on each side by four collection-grade lozenge-cut diamonds elegantly set in 18K white gold. Visit skfinejewelry.com IG: [@sonyakjewelry](https://www.instagram.com/sonyakjewelry)

28. DEL ESTE JEWELRY was founded by Italian designer, Maria Teresa Tupini. Her passion for design is palpable, intertwining classic designs with contemporary styles, creating timeless pieces with a warm modern edge. Striving for their customers to feel bold, chic and fierce when wearing their jewellery. Featured are the Diamante Earrings, which are part of their new MTT Fine Jewellery Collection. Available in different sizes up to 4 karats and in natural or lab-grown diamonds. Visit shopdeleste.com IG: [@shopdeleste](https://www.instagram.com/shopdeleste)

29. The cosmos of **NESÔ STUDIO** reflects the fluidity and uniqueness of life, staying true to the nature of the natural satellite of planet Neptune and the Nereid Neso protectress of Greek islands and waters. Nesô Studio traces its own highly eccentric orbit in the world of modern jewellery design. Featured is their Moon love ring, crafted using a wax sculpture technique with a blue sapphire and snake shape to symbolise matriarchy and the umbilical cord. Visit nesostudio.com IG: [@neso.studio](https://www.instagram.com/neso.studio)

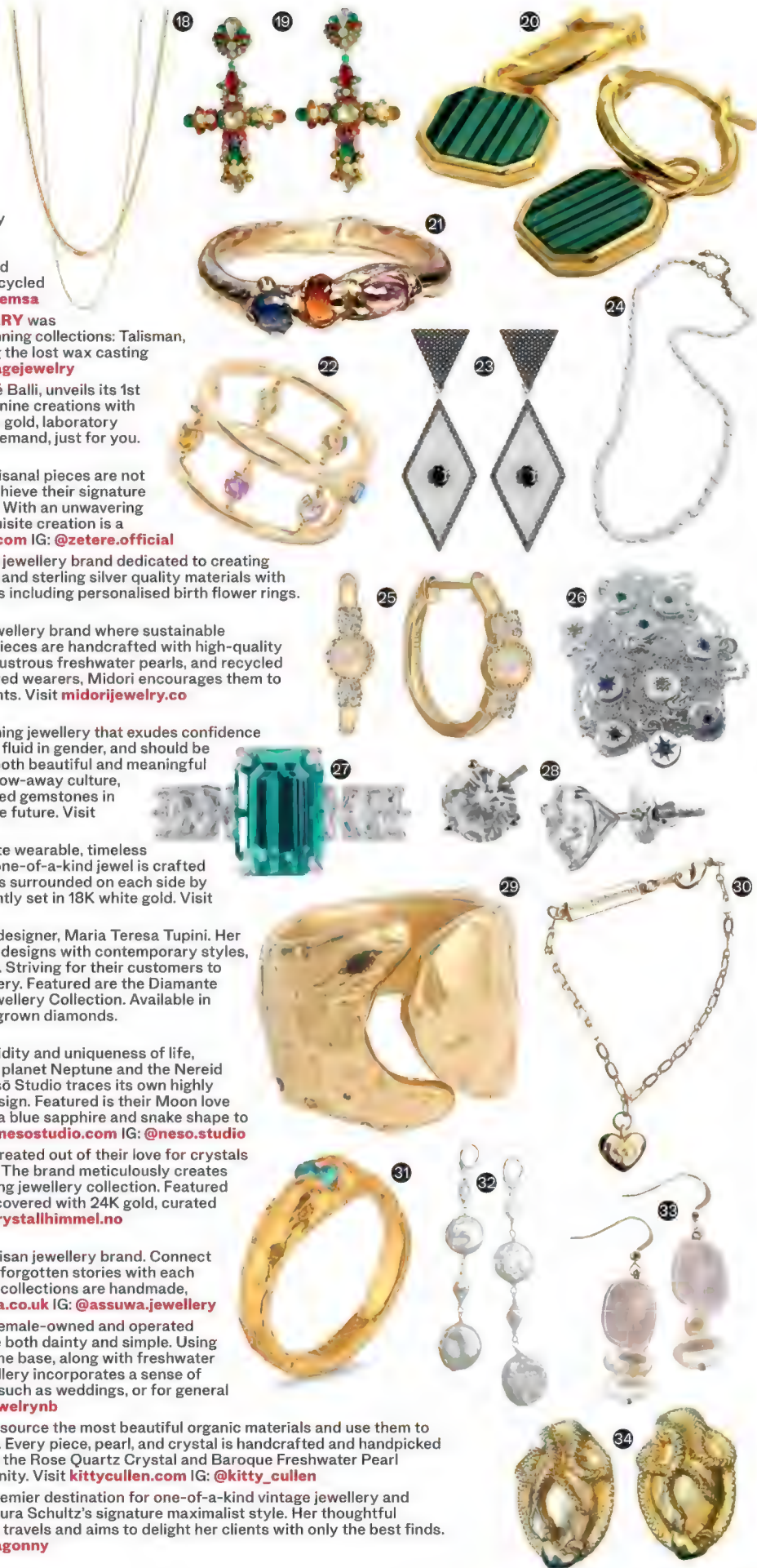
30. Welcome to **KRYSTALLHIMMEL**, the brand created out of their love for crystals and awe of the natural world and it's unique forms. The brand meticulously creates crystal-embedded products, including their stunning jewellery collection. Featured is their Golden Eye bracelet, made with brass and covered with 24K gold, curated with the aim to protect you from negativity. Visit krystallhimmel.no IG: [@krystallhimmel.no](https://www.instagram.com/krystallhimmel.no)

31. ASSUWA is a female-founded, sustainable, artisan jewellery brand. Connect with nature and ancient wisdom through unfolding forgotten stories with each talisman. Designed to last a lifetime, their mystical collections are handmade, unique and perfect with imperfections. Visit assuwa.co.uk IG: [@assuwa.jewellery](https://www.instagram.com/assuwa.jewellery)

32. Handmade in Canada, **SADIE JEWELRY** is a female-owned and operated jewellery brand that creates classic pieces that are both dainty and simple. Using either 14-karat gold filled or 925 sterling silver as the base, along with freshwater pearls and other semi-precious materials, her jewellery incorporates a sense of versatility, making it perfect for special occasions such as weddings, or for general everyday wear. Visit sadiejewelry.ca IG: [@sadiejewelrynb](https://www.instagram.com/sadiejewelrynb)

33. KITTY CULLEN was founded with a desire to source the most beautiful organic materials and use them to create one-of-a-kind, 'perfectly imperfect' designs. Every piece, pearl, and crystal is handcrafted and handpicked with sustainable fashion ethics in mind. Pictured is the Rose Quartz Crystal and Baroque Freshwater Pearl Earrings, which represents compassion and femininity. Visit kittycullen.com IG: [@kitty_cullen](https://www.instagram.com/kitty_cullen)

34. KIMONO DRAGON, is the New York-based premier destination for one-of-a-kind vintage jewellery and accessories. The KD collection reflects founder Laura Schultz's signature maximalist style. Her thoughtful curation brings together pieces from her extensive travels and aims to delight her clients with only the best finds. Visit kimono-dragon.com and on IG: [@kimonodragonny](https://www.instagram.com/kimonodragonny)





MELISSA ETHERIDGE

*The musician and author of the new memoir
Talking to My Angels on pancakes, Patrick
Mahomes, and the power of attention*

What is your favorite occupation? Rock star.
When and where were you happiest? When I'm in the middle of my family and we're all laughing. A very close second is when I'm onstage.

What is your greatest extravagance? Having my hairdresser come out to my home to cut and color my hair and my whole family's hair. I haven't been to a salon in years. **What is your greatest fear?** To let fear overcome my life. We're not gonna let that happen because love is always greater than fear. **What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?** *Deplore* is a heavy word. I don't deplore it but I constantly feel the pull of my old Midwestern ways of eating. Boy, can I put some pancakes away. **Which words or phrases do you most overuse?** *Journey* and *path*. And I'm sure I will use it a few more times in this. **Which talent would you most like to have?** Athletic talent. I have none. **On what occasion do you lie?** I gave up lying at least 15 years ago. The truth is always, always, always, always—no exception—better for your health and for the world.

What do you dislike most about your appearance? I gave up on that too. I gave up disliking my appearance 'cause that's crazy making. Especially in women. I love my appearance. **What is your greatest regret?** Bruce Springsteen's record company asked my record company if they could put our duet of "Thunder Road" on the B side of his single "Secret Garden." Island Records was mad at Sony, so they asked me not to say yes. It was a silly business thing that they were having, and I missed the opportunity to put that out into the world. **If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?** Again, not gonna change anything about myself. I've really learned to appreciate everything. Okay, maybe I'd be taller. How about that? **Which living person do you most despise?** I'm not a despising person. I do not give my attention or my energy to people who are outside of my vibrational understanding. **If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?** A wide receiver that catches passes from Patrick Mahomes. **What is your most treasured possession?** My earlier guitars, and a harmonica Springsteen gave me on my birthday. It's silver-plated from Tiffany that he got engraved. **Who are your favorite writers?** Jeanette Winterson, Virginia Woolf, and Alice Walker. **Who is your favorite hero of fiction?** Orlando. Male, female, everything. **Who are your heroes in real life?** My stagehands. My roadies. My technicians that set up and tear down my show every single night. **What is your favorite journey?** I'm on it right now. This journey of life. This is the stuff, man. This is it. ■

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LOUIS VUITTON

FINE JEWELLERY

Please turn the page to view Supplement

VANITY FAIR

SEPTEMBER 2017

On Time

WE CELEBRATE WITH

Alessandro
Ristori

SECRETS OF
THE RED CARPET

*The STARS,
the FASHIONS,
the TIMEPIECES*

THE
GOOD
LIFE

FINE
VINTAGES

WATCHES and
WINEMAKING

PLUS

*Horology's
favourite DJs,
good causes,
great experiences*

ISSUE

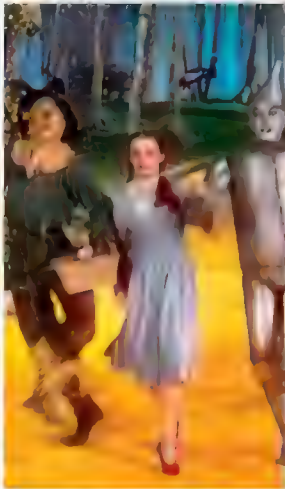
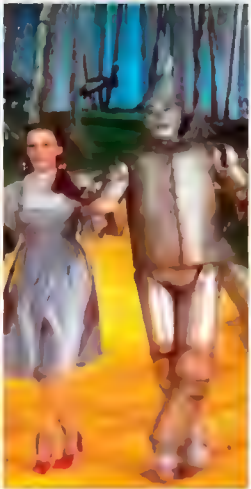
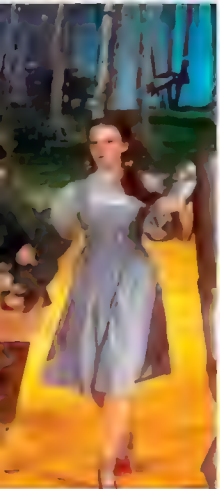


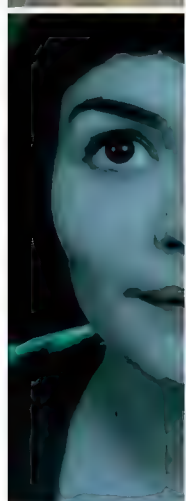
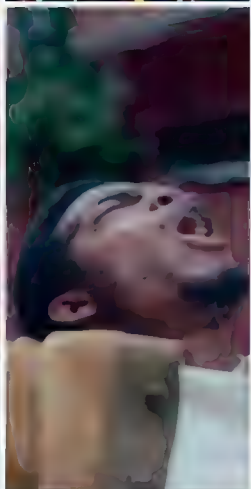
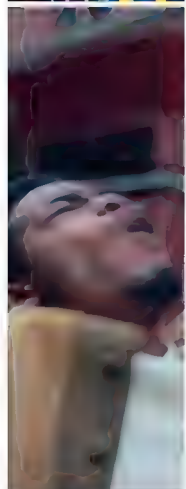
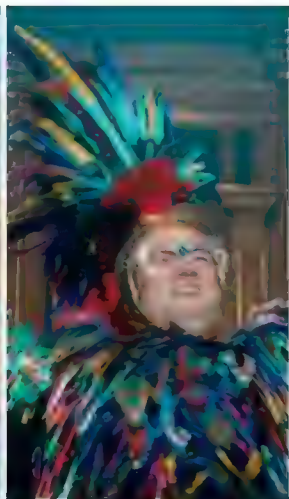
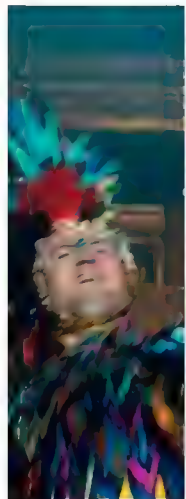
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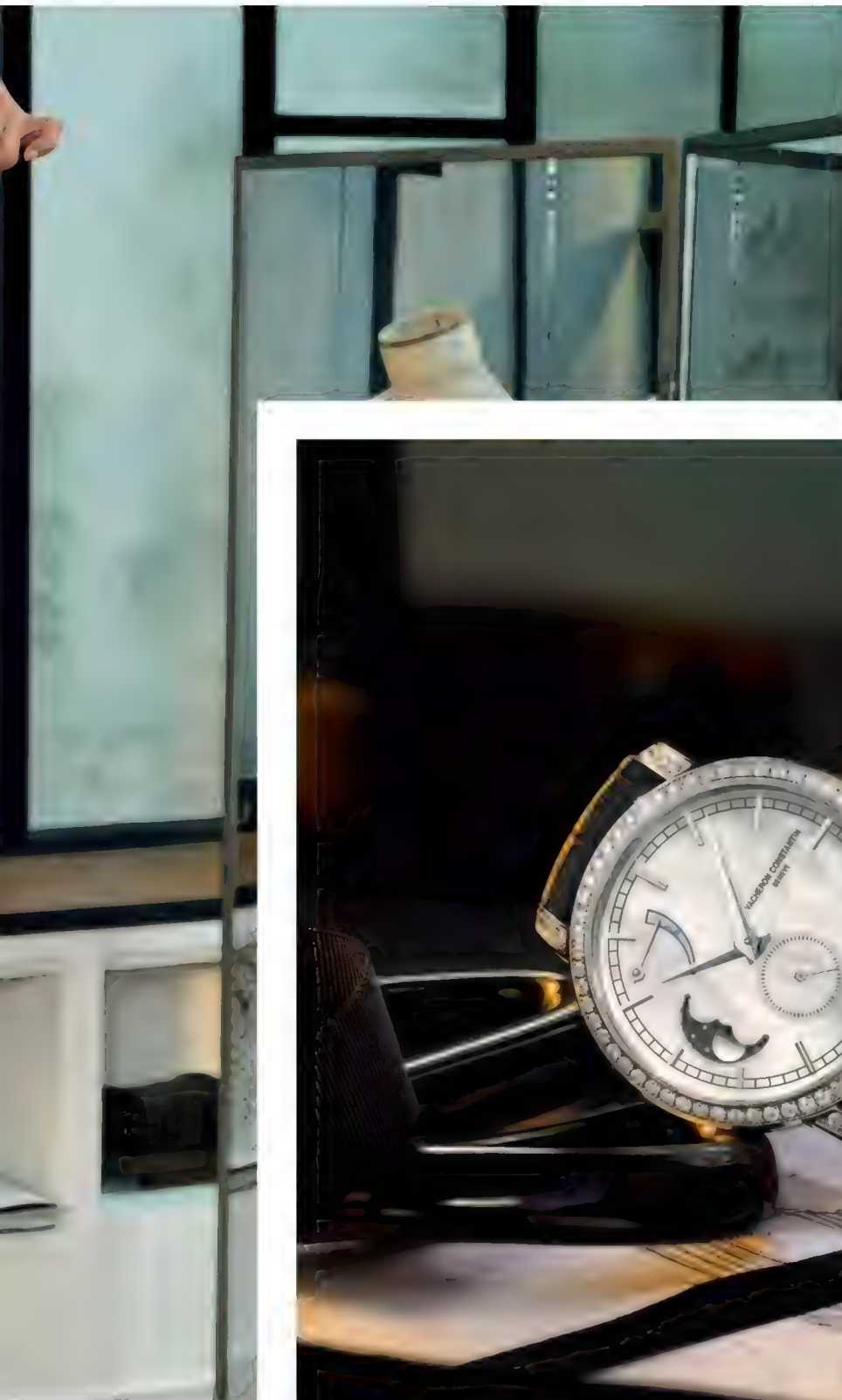
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Van Cleef & Arpels

Haute Joailliers - Haute Couture - since 1906





Lady Apple,
Hugoboss Chronos, 18k rose gold,
White Diamond, 18k rose gold case, 18k
rose gold, 18k rose gold and 18k
rose gold.



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By *Vivienne Becker, Robin Swithinbank, Annabel Davidson and Jack Forster*

Emma Thynn, Marchioness of Bath

"I think about what everyone needs to have a good time all the time."

78

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One-off watches made for charitable causes now sell for extraordinary prices.

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The Vanity Fair On Time Portfolio 2023: The Good Life

Pleasure seeking with Emma Thynn, Marchioness of Bath, Alessandro Ristori, Orlando Hamilton, Gilberto Gil, Carole Bamford, Greg Williams and Andreas Caminada.

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Watch Report

Live it up in a timely manner with the *Vanity Fair On Time* selection of the season's most delectable dials.

By *Nicholas Foulkes*



On the Cover

Alessandro Ristori photographed by Alberto Zanetti. Alessandro wears a GUCCI 25H.

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PORSCHE

**TWO LEGENDS.
60 ICONIC YEARS.**

THE RACE NEVER STOPS



To say that we do not live in the best of times is to state the obvious: pandemic, war, demagoguery, economic insecurity—and that is just for starters.

Depending on your taste in apocalyptic scenarios, we are looking down the barrel of extinction by climatic *Götterdämmerung* or the rise of artificial intelligence.

Given the sombre timbre of the times, the idea of an issue of *Vanity Fair On Time* devoted to the good life and good times might seem counterintuitive. Because it is—which is precisely why it is so necessary.

In darker times, more than ever, we need to smile. I think you will have found it hard not to smile when looking at our cover showing the consummate entertainer and minstrel king of the European resort scene Alessandro Ristori on the beach in Forte dei Marmi. He is part of a portfolio (p82) of portraits of individuals whom we think embody the spirit of the good life in one way or another: whether that's Carole Bamford, who has spent the past 20 years transforming her farmshop into the globally renowned Daylesford Organic; Greg Williams, who has created a body of photographic work documenting the good life as lived by the world's biggest stars; or chef Andreas Caminada, who has pursued the culinary arts to such perfection that his restaurant Schloss Schauenstein has been awarded three Michelin stars.

Staying with the pleasures of the table for a moment, we also examine the links between viniculture and horology, oenophilia and horophilia (p57); visiting the châteaux and vineyards of some of the biggest players in the watch industry, who have found that minute repeaters go well with malbecs and chronographs with cabernets.

Of course, the watch world enjoys a party as much as anyone, and with this in mind Brynn Wallner has compiled a playlist of horology's favourite DJs and explains how the mixing deck is getting closer and closer to the watchmakers' bench (p62). Meanwhile celebrity watch-spotter *par excellence* Malaika Crawford examines the importance of the red carpet (or, in the case of this year's Met Gala, the red, cream and turquoise carpet) to modern watchmaking (p68) and finds out how the watches worn at film festivals or in the front row of fashion shows attract the sort of attention once reserved for celebrity fashion choices. And before you dismiss all this as heedless fun, make sure you read Ming Liu's brief history of the charity watch gala auction

(p78), which shows the good that can come from having a good time.

I certainly had a good time attending Philippe Dufour's 75th birthday party earlier this summer in the Vallée de Joux. It is not often that I find myself outdressed but on this occasion I was nowhere near the birthday boy's flamingo-pink three-piece suit. He was dressed to enjoy himself and there was indeed singing, dancing, dining and drinking. Then, halfway through the evening, things slowed down for the announcement of the inauguration of the Philippe & Elisabeth Dufour Foundation, and the presentation of the gorgeous aventurine-dial watch that will be sold at auction in its benefit. It was a birthday party with the emphasis on giving rather than receiving: the very definition of a good time doing good.



Nick Foulk

NICHOLAS FOULKES, *Editor*

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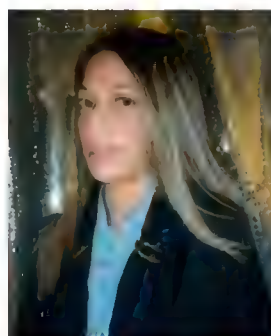


A Racing Machine On The Wrist

Contributors



From left: Rosaline Shahnava; Alberto Zanetti; Malaika Crawford; Matthew Billington; Brynn Wallner.



Rosaline SHAHNAVAZ

PORTFOLIO, P.82

London-born photographer Shahnava endeavours to capture the spirit of her sitters, and for this issue's Portfolio she turns her lens on Emma Thynn, Marchioness of Bath. At once playful and informal yet poised, Shahnava's candid approach can be seen in publications such as *Billboard*, *Vogue*, *Dazed*, *GQ*, the *Financial Times*, *Tatler* and the *Sunday Times*.

Alberto ZANETTI

PORTFOLIO, P.84

During his university studies, Zanetti met photographer Pierpaolo Ferrari in New York, who offered him an assistant role. After a long apprenticeship, he struck out on his own in fashion photography and portraiture; in this issue he shoots musician Alessandro Ristori for our Portfolio. He has been involved with *Toilettepaper* magazine, founded by Ferrari and Maurizio Cattelan, since it started in 2010.

Malaika CRAWFORD

"MAGIC CARPET", P.68

As the style editor at *Hodinkee* magazine and a freelance wardrobe stylist, Crawford reports on the space where fashion and watches meet—she reports this issue on the joys of red-carpet watchspotting. Prior to her position at *Hodinkee*, she was the watch and jewellery editor at *Highsnobiety*. When not writing or styling, she co-hosts a watch and culture podcast called *Killing Time* with Brynn Wallner.

Matthew BILLINGTON

NEWS, P.34

Currently resident in Toronto, with wife (Casie) and dog (Poochie), award-winning illustrator Matthew Billington has clients spanning the globe, including the *New York Times*, *Esquire*, *Condé Nast Traveller* and *Wired*. His colourful illustrations grace Jonathan Guthrie's monthly column, Nature Therapy, in the *Financial Times*, and can be seen adorning our news pages. In his spare time he enjoys live music.

Brynn WALLNER


"WHEELS OF STEEL", P.62

Writer Brynn Wallner discovered her love for haute horlogerie while working in the editorial department at Sotheby's in 2019. She is the founder of *Dimepiece*, a platform launched in 2020, dedicated to all things women and watches—she acquired her first luxury timepiece in 2021 to celebrate its success. In this issue, she writes about the interface between watchmaking and the world of superstar DJs.

ZANETTI: COSIMO BUCCOLIERI; CRAWFORD: LUISA OPALSKY; WALLNER: AVA VAN OSDOL.

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CHRONOMETERS

STOPWATCH

ON TIME AUTUMN 2023

AT THE BEGINNING of the 1964 film *Fantômas*, Jean Marais (in the title role) is welcomed into a Place Vendôme jeweller by a suave, elegantly dressed man with matinee-idol good looks. This was no actor—it was Pierre Arpels, who so closely embodied the filmmaker's vision of what a Parisian jeweller looked like that he played himself. Arpels was the cynosure of elegance, equally at home with Prince Rainier in Monte Carlo or in Tehran designing the coronation crown for the Shah's wife, Farah Diba. An innovator, it was he who in 1976 pioneered the first jeweller's fragrance (named, appropriately enough, First). A true aesthete, he lived a life of rarefied sophistication: on the terrace of his Parisian apartment he installed a Japanese Zen garden; and in 1949 he designed his own watch, the PA.49. It was a timepiece in his own image; smooth, svelte, chic and timeless, the watch was a family secret and only commercialised in 1971. **NF** ■



Pierre Arpels with Dewi Sukarno at the launch of his fragrance First in 1976. Inset: Van Cleef & Arpels yellow-gold and malachite watch, 1974.

AG19/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES, VAN CLEEF & ARPELS COLLECTION



NEW BR 03 41MM TIME INSTRUMENT



Bell & Ross

Hammer HOME

Roger Moore's 007 dials, a spacewalking chronograph and a Roger Smith record stir up the auction action. BY SIMON DE BURTON

HOT Rockers

As the 10th edition of the biennial Only Watch charity auction (which has raised close to £89m for Duchenne muscular dystrophy research since 2005) approaches, 62 dial names have donated unique pieces. Jaquet Droz has created a Rolling Stones automaton watch, with miniature guitars and drums. L. Leroy took inspiration from a pendant watch it made in 1810 for a German prince to create a single-hand minute repeater, while Zenith is offering a one-lot quartet of Chronomaster Sport models, with dials in a one-off colour. Stablenate TAG Heuer has produced a Monaco containing its first-ever mechanical, split-second chronograph movement and Bell & Ross has pitched in with the Cyber Rainbow version of its BR 03. The watches start a world tour ahead of the November 5 sale in Geneva.



Luck of the Draw

This giant leather briefcase for the serious collector offered in a Sotheby's online sale in June featured six slim drawers and two deep ones to provide sufficient storage space for 70 watches. Made in 1995, the hefty piece of horological luggage sold for £14,500—while the previous lot, a rosewood and mahogany watch cabinet by master carpenter William Evans of Maine, realised just £7,300. Produced in 2002, it could hold more than 150 timepieces.



Doctor's ORDERS

A collection of 116 relatively insignificant watches by Rolex, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Breitling, Patek Philippe, Cartier and IWC amassed by a Canadian enthusiast over decades fetched almost £172,000 between them when they were sold by Bonhams in a dedicated online sale. The star lot was a 1930s Rolex Prince Brancard doctor's watch which, despite a badly stained dial, realised £12,160. An unsigned but delightful rectangular dress watch with a sunburst dial proved to be the bargain of the day, fetching just £127.



HERO WATCH Audemars Piguet Starwheel

Audemars Piguet's relentless focus on its top-selling Royal Oak watches during recent years makes it easy to forget that, historically, it has long been one of the most innovative of all the grand maisons. This spirit of innovation manifested itself prominently in 1992 with the launch of the Starwheel. Inspiration for the watch with no hands came in 1989 from an old issue of the *Swiss Horological Journal*, which included mention of an 18th-century clock that displayed the time by means of a trio of rotating discs that, in turn, rotated on top of another disc. Just 18 months later, and the wraps were pulled off the first Starwheel, a 36.2mm diameter watch in which



the conventional dial was replaced with three wafer-thin sapphire discs, each carrying four numerals topped by individual pointers. They were set on a central wheel that turned 360 degrees every three hours, positioning the relevant numeral along a graduated arc in the top third of the watch so that its pointer could indicate the minutes. After years when prices remained on a plateau, its value is now beginning to rise. Pink-gold, yellow-gold and platinum variants are available, along with alternative case shapes such as the ovoid Millenary and the cushion-shaped John Shaeffer. Our graph shows prices achieved for round-cased versions only. Production ceased in 2003.



DRAWERS, SOTHEBY'S; HANDS, GETTY IMAGES; ROLLING STONES, KMAZUR/WIREIMAGE/GETTY IMAGES; STETHOSCOPE, GETTY IMAGES; WATCHES, AUDEMARS PIGUET; BONHAMS, ONLY WATCH/JAQUET DROZ.



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THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS – SINCE 1860

Creative LICENCE

Bonhams is to mark 50 years since the late Sir Roger Moore appeared in the first of his seven James Bond films (*Live and Let Die*) with a 180-lot sale of his personal memorabilia. Items on offer include the white ski suit he wore in *A View to a Kill* (£15,000-£25,000), a large collection of his trademark silk ties and cravats (£500-£1,000) and a plaque commemorating his star being placed on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2007 (£10,000-£15,000). Inevitably there are also several watches on offer, including an Omega Seamaster James Bond 50th Anniversary special from 2012 dedicated “To Roger from Michael [Wilson] and Barbara



[Broccoli]”. It is tipped to realise up to £30,000, while an Omega Speedmaster engraved “To Sir Roger” is estimated at £5,000-£7,000 and a presentation case of Swatch 007 watches at £10,000-£20,000. A humble Concord, however, has been listed at just £200-£300. It is engraved on the back “New York Friars Club, thanks Roger Moore 6.6.92”. The sale will be held in London on October 4.

POCKET CHANGE

A gold pocket watch made by Isle of Man-based Roger Smith sold for £3.8m at Phillips New York in June, a record price for any British timepiece. Smith constructed the 66mm watch with perpetual calendar and moon phases between 1991 and 1996 before presenting it for approval to celebrated horologist George Daniels, who pronounced: “You are now a watchmaker”. Smith, who later became Daniels’ only apprentice, sold the Pocket Watch Number Two in 2004 to finance setting up his own R.W. Smith brand.



Sea WORTHY

■ **THIS 1968 HEUER** Seafarer sailing watch made for outdoor-pursuits supplier Abercrombie & Fitch fetched a three-times-estimate of £31,000 when it appeared at Christie’s New York in June. Heuer began supplying watches to Abercrombie & Fitch in the 1940s, typically with complications such as tide indicators and regatta timers that appealed to the store’s adventurous patrons (who included John F. Kennedy, Amelia Earhart and Ernest Hemingway). This example had been in the same family from new—and appeared for sale shortly before the modern-day TAG Heuer launched a new version of its own classic sailing watch, the Carrera Skipper, which was originally inspired by the Seafarer.



Collector’s Slots

■ A TRIO OF GEM-SET

watches realised a modest £2,900 between them when they cropped-up in a £96,000 Bonhams sale of 46 items relating to the late San Francisco jeweller Sidney Mobell, who found fame by creating extraordinary objects out of ordinary ones. In addition to the watches, the June auction included Mobell-made items such as a gem-set and gold-plated slot machine. Mobell, who died last year aged 96, counted Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Danielle Steel and members of the Disney family among his patrons.



AUCTION CALENDAR

Autumn Winter 2023

September

- 8 Phillips, Geneva
- 12 Noonans, London
- 13 Bonhams, London
- 15-20 Sotheby’s, Paris
- 20 Gardiner Houlgate, Bath
- 20 Antiquorum, Hong Kong

October

- 5 Sotheby’s, Hong Kong
- 7-17 Sotheby’s, Hong Kong
- 14 Bonhams, Paris
- 18 Gardiner Houlgate, Bath
- 24-7 Sotheby’s, Geneva

November

- 3-4 Phillips, Geneva
- 4-5 Antiquorum, Geneva
- 5 Christie’s, Geneva (Only Watch)
- 5 Sotheby’s, Geneva
- 6 Christie’s, Geneva
- 18 Dr. Crott, Mannheim
- 22 Bonhams, London
- 22 Gardiner Houlgate, Bath
- 25-26 Antiquorum, Hong Kong
- 28 Noonans, London
- 29-12 Sotheby’s, New York

December

- 7 Sotheby’s, New York
- 13 Bonhams, London

ABERCROMBIE & FITCH: JEFFREY MINTZER/ISTOCK; HAMMER: DYNAS/GETTY IMAGES; MOORE: ZUMA PRESS/VIEW; SELL SUIT: BONHAMS; SLOT MACHINE: BONHAMS; WALK OF FAME PLAQUE: BONHAMS; WATCHES: BONHAMS; CHRISTIE’S; PHILLIPS; YACHTS: ROLLS PRESS/POPE/GETTY VIA GETTY IMAGES.



HERMÈS H08,
TIME, A HERMÈS OBJECT



AUCTIONEERS' Top Tips

Buy, Sell, Hold

	BUY		SELL		HOLD
Benoît Colson Sotheby's, Paris	 Quality vintage, automatic Patek Philippe Calatrava.		A. Lange & Söhne, Lange 1 and chronograph.		Vintage Rolex Sport models, especially GMT and early Submariner. 
Jonathan Darracott Bonhams, London	 Unusual dials by Patek Philippe, Rolex, Piaget and Omega.		Gem-set watches by Rolex and Audemars Piguet		All rare and unusual Omega models. 
Julien Schaerer Antiquorum, Geneva	 1980s and 1990s Breguet prior to its acquisition by Swatch in 1999.		Audemars Piguet Royal Oak. The market is still adjusting downwards.		Patek Philippe Nautilus—it will remain an all-time classic. 
Paul Boutros Phillips, New York	 Vintage stainless-steel Rolex sport watches with glossy and gilt dials.		Early (pre-1995) Daniel Roth wristwatches.		Late and current production F.P. Journe watches. 
Remi Guillemain Christie's, Geneva	 Neo-vintage 1990s Breguet: perpetual calendars and minute repeaters.		Modern Richard Mille, except extremely rare models.		Gérald Genta—the rise in interest is only beginning and will steadily increase. 
Stefan Muser Dr. Crott, Mannheim	 Vintage Audemars Piguet Royal Oak models. Prices have plummeted.		Vintage IWC Ingenieur.		All independent makers as well as Patek Philippe Nautilus models. 
Toby Sutton Watches of Knightsbridge	 Rare 21st-century pieces by Parmigiani Fleurier, Roger Dubuis and Granck Muller.		Quartz-powered Omega and TAG Heuer models, early 2000s Rolex Cellini.		Vintage Cartier and CPCP: demand remains strong compared with supply. 



WORLD BEATER

An 1805 Breguet pocket watch made for Baron Alexander von Humboldt—the 19th-century German explorer and scientist known as the father of environmentalism—is set to fetch up to £172,000 when it is offered for sale by Mannheim auctioneer Dr. Crott on November 18. Von Humboldt was the first person to describe the Americas from the viewpoint of western science, and the first to realise that lands such as South America and Africa were once connected. He carried Breguet timepieces on most of his expeditions, and he is recorded as having paid 950 francs for the 61mm pocket chronometer, which is numbered 147.

Orbital MOTION

■ A 1989 OMEGA SPEEDMASTER chronograph that was worn by Russian cosmonaut Anatoly Solovyev during a 179-day mission with the Soyuz TM-9 spacecraft in 1990 fetched £60,250 at a Bonhams online sale of Russian space history in July. Solovyev wore the watch on two spacewalks during the trip, on one occasion causing deep scratches to its crystal, while forcibly reseating a damaged pressure hatch on the Kvant-2 module of the Mir space station. The watch, which was sold complete with its original, extra-long Velcro strap, had been estimated to sell for no more than £23,000.



Wave MACHINE

■ A ROLEX SUBMARINER supplied to a member of the Royal Navy before being given to the vendor more than 20 years ago as an 18th-birthday gift fetched an estimate-busting £190,900 when it appeared at Bonhams London on June 21. The ultra-collectable reference 5513 MilSub was in exceptional condition, complete with its correct sword hands, tritium lume and MoD engravings showing that it was issued in 1975. The fixed-bar safety strap attachments used on MilSubs mean they can only be worn on Nato-style nylon straps.



ROUTES: PHILLIPS; COLSON: SOTHEBY'S; DARRACOTT: BONHAMS; GUILLEMAIN: CHRISTIE'S; MUSER: DR. CROTT; SCHAERER: ANTIQUORUM; SOLOVYEV: SPACE FRONTIERS/MAGNETIC IMAGES; SUTTON: WATCHES OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE; VON HUMBOLDT: CPA MEDIA; PTE LTD/ALAMY; WATCHES: ANTIQUORUM; BONHAMS; CHRISTIE'S; DE CROTT; PHILLIPS; SOTHEBY'S; WATCHES OF KNIGHTSBRIDGE



TUDOR

#BORN TODARE

With a long and illustrious history in sailing, the brand's passion for the sport is evident in the design of its watches. The Tudor Pelagos TXD Chrono is a chronograph watch with a black dial, white hands and indices, and a black leather strap. It is a perfect companion for any sailing enthusiast.

Alinghi Red Bull Racing

Racing



PELAGOS TXD CHRONO



MAIN PARTNER

COLLABORATIONS

Audemars Piguet announced the release of four new Royal Oak and Royal Oak Offshore limited boutique editions as well as one unique piece in collaboration with fashion designer and founder of the brand 1017 Alyx 9SM, Matthew M. Williams. Since 2007, Williams has worked with the likes of Kanye West, Virgil Abloh and Lady Gaga and was named creative director of Givenchy in 2020. Williams has collaborated in the past with brands such as Nike, Dior and Moncler, however the designer has taken a subtle, minimalistic approach with the new 18-carat gold Royal Oak

and Royal Oak Offshore novelties by keeping a largely monochromatic and softened appearance throughout, and by removing the outer rings of the subdials, while keeping the chronograph functions on three of the four self-winding editions. The unique piece was auctioned in August in Tokyo with proceeds benefiting the charities Kids in Motion and Right to Play.

Saint Laurent Rive Droite and Swiss watch brand **Girard-Perregaux** joined forces on a new, limited version of the popular 1970s Casquette timepiece. Saint Laurent creative director Anthony Vaccarello made the decision to craft this model of the Casquette in black ceramic and black PVD-treated grade 5 titanium. Equipped with a chronograph function and limited to 100 pieces, the Casquette 2.0 Saint-Laurent 01 is available exclusively at Saint Laurent Rive Droite boutiques in Paris and Los Angeles, as well as online via the official Saint Laurent Rive Droite store.

Norwegian watch brand **Micromilspec** has

collaborated with the newest branch of the American armed forces—the United States Space Force (USSF)—on a watch designed specifically for active-duty members, veterans and associated personnel of the service. Crafted in a black PVD-coated stainless-steel case, the matt black dial is decorated with the official USSF logo atop a starry-sky

pattern. *Semper supra* (Latin for “always above”) appears on the watch and the caseback may be personalised for each individual purchaser. As a bonus, Micromilspec, based in Oslo, is also offering a slightly different civilian version of the 42mm watch in non-coated stainless steel, which can be ordered through the brand’s website.



Race to the Top

To mark the 100th anniversary of the 24 Hours of Le Mans car race in Le Mans, France, **Rolex** has introduced a new Cosmograph Daytona. Manufactured in 18-carat white gold, this new watch is adorned with a Cerachrom bezel in glossy

black ceramic, which surrounds the “reverse-panda” black dial and soft white subdials. On the tachymetric scale, the number 100 in red ceramic signifies the race’s centennial, and the piece is powered by the calibre 4132 self-winding movement.

To mark the third year of its partnership with Williams Racing,

Bremont introduced the limited-edition Bremont and Williams Racing WR-45 chronograph watch just ahead of the 77th Formula 1 Aramco British Grand Prix at Silverstone, the home of British racing. The watch is limited to 244 pieces and the design takes inspiration from this season’s Williams Racing chassis, the FW-45.



ILLUSTRATIONS: MATTHEW BILLINGTON

PIAGET

PIAGET POLO COLLECTION



AMBASSADORS

Vacheron Constantin recently announced that artist Zaria Forman will be the newest member of the brand's One of Not Many campaign. Forman, through her pastel works based on her own photographs taken in some of the world's most remote places, creates awareness of the impact of climate change across various landscapes. Alongside musician Benjamin Clementine, product designer Ora-ïto, photographer Cory Richards and fashion designer Yiqing Yin, Forman joins the growing list of artists whose character and creations chime with those of Vacheron Constantin.

Pop superstar Rihanna has been a friend of **Jacob & Co** for many years, but the new face of Louis Vuitton nearly broke the watch-world internet when she wore a Jacob & Co Brilliant Flying Tourbillon watch set with 338 baguette-cut white diamonds as a choker, while sitting front row at the Vuitton fashion show in Paris in June. She was supporting Pharrell Williams, Louis Vuitton's



new men's creative director (and friend of Jacob Arabo), who presented his inaugural collection.

Cartier introduced a new face to represent their Panthère de Cartier collection: Korean pop superstar V from the multi-platinum music group BTS. V, whose given name is Kim Taehyung, was announced as the brand's newest ambassador this summer. "When it came to embodying the magnetism and aura of the panther, our choice naturally fell on V," said Arnaud Carrez, Cartier's senior vice-president and chief

marketing officer. "He has the look and strength of character. A personality whose choices are guided by creativity as a dancer, musician or art lover, with this style and this elegance that belong only to him."

Breitling launched its new Navitimer "For the Journey" campaign with the help of basketball star Giannis Antetokounmpo, dancer Misty Copeland, aviation pioneer Bertrand Piccard and actress Charlize Theron; the latter will be the face of the new 32mm and 36mm Navitimer watches.

French mountaineer Charles Dubouloz has become a **Richard Mille** brand ambassador. In January 2022, he climbed one of the world's most difficult ascents: the Rolling Stones route on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses Mont Blanc massif in France. When asked why, he said, "It was the need to channel my boundless energy. Mountains are the place where I can express myself. This is why I'm attracted to Richard Mille: there's something extreme; the watches are like the elemental landscapes I express myself in."



MODERN CLASSIC: Louis Vuitton Tambour by Nicholas Foulkes

Introduced at the beginning of the millennium, LV's signature Tambour changed little in over 20 years... until it changed a lot. Indeed, as far as I can see the only thing that remains the same is the name. Gone are the chunky lugs and the funnel-like case walls unmissably engraved with the brand name. At 8.3mm high, it is 5.5mm slimmer than its predecessor and while the brand name is engraved on the angled top part of the case wall, it is much more subtle [1]. The watch head is seamlessly integrated



with the bracelet [2]. The micro-sandblasted dial features a stepped, split-level chapter ring [3], and there is further contrast with recessed five-minute markers and applied hour markers [4]. There is also a little Easter egg for wearers to discover: instead of the words *Swiss Made*, the legend *Fab. En Suisse* is slotted neatly beneath the sub seconds at 6 o'clock, a nod to classic vintage watch dials [5]. This new watch houses a similarly new calibre, the LFT023, which features a planetary rotor.

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NEW BOUTIQUES

Atlanta played host to Oscar-winning actress Ariana DeBose for the grand reopening of the new **Omega** boutique inside of Phipps Plaza. DeBose—an Omega ambassador—and US brand president Arnaud Michon cut the ribbon at an official ceremony to open the new space in the Atlanta high-end shopping district.

Hublot recently debuted its first boutique in Austria. Hublot CEO Ricardo Guadalupe welcomed enthusiasts and collectors to celebrate the official opening of the Hublot Vienna Boutique in the city's Golden Quarter. The space's interior design reflects the brand's Art of Fusion philosophy, combining a variety of high-quality materials and pop-art paintings.

This past summer, Jacob Arabo was present in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to unveil the largest **Jacob & Co** boutique in the world along with football star Cristiano Ronaldo. The

Riyadh boutique—opened in partnership with local high-jewellery retail specialist Salujain—is located in Al Akaria Plaza in the city's most prestigious shopping area. Jacob & Co now has 94 boutiques and shops-within-shops, with at least 10 more openings planned before the year is over.

Watches of Switzerland has opened a Breitling boutique on Davygate in York. "We are thrilled to bring the full Breitling experience to the city of York, where we can showcase the universe of Breitling to our domestic and international clients who visit the city and take in its truly unique history," said Breitling UK managing director Gavin Murphy. The new boutique, Breitling's 23rd in the UK, brings the brand's Manhattan loft-style design to this popular shopping destination.

Panerai unveiled its latest boutique in the

heart of New York City. Dubbed Casa Panerai, the Madison Avenue boutique is its largest, and offers a visual feast with LED screens displaying the brand's connection to the marine realm as well as the spirit of adventure. A larger-than-life luminous green wall clock greets those who venture through its doors.

Also in the Big Apple, **TAG Heuer** opened a

flagship boutique in July on 5th Avenue near the Rockefeller Center and St Patrick's Cathedral with a star-studded event; guests included Patrick Dempsey, Kieran Culkin and Natasha Lyonne.

Meanwhile, a new appointment-only **H. Moser & Cie** store designed with a relaxed industrial aesthetic opens in The Skylark building on New York's West 39th Street in October.



In at the Deep End

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of its support of the Manta Trust, **Carl F. Bucherer** released the Patravi ScubaTec Verde timepiece. Over the past decade, the brand has provided funding for ecological studies, research expeditions and marine education programmes. The watch's colour is inspired by the intensely green waters around Isla de la Plata, a small island off

the Ecuadorian coast that plays host to more than 22,000 oceanic manta rays which gather there every August and September.

Ulysse Nardin has been an official sponsor of the Ocean Race since 2021, largely due to the race's dedication to ocean preservation and the brand's shared interests. However this year, Ulysse Nardin also partnered with the 11th Hour Racing Team, which, after a roughly 32,000 nautical-mile journey that began in January in Alicante on the

Costa Blanca and ended with a spectacular finale in Genoa in July, was deemed the winner of the 2023 race—the first team from the United States to do so.

Breitling's new partnership with the Surfrider Foundation saw a beach clean-up take place in Biarritz over the summer. "Together we are stepping up the global fight for clean oceans, not only for today but for future generations," said Breitling CEO Georges Kern. Founded in 1984 by Malibu surfers, Surfrider has 1m members.



CHARLIZE THERON
NAVITIMER



BREITLING



PARTNERSHIPS

Breguet announced its official partnership with the historic Royal Albert Hall in London, which, in the 152 years since its opening, has welcomed dignitaries and celebrities such as Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein, Ella Fitzgerald and the Beatles. “We’re delighted to announce this new partnership with Breguet. The hall was established to champion the arts and sciences, and Breguet’s stunning creations have brought these two disciplines together for almost 250 years,” said the Albert Hall’s CEO, James Ainscough. The watch

brand is currently associated with institutions such as Carnegie Hall in New York, the Teatro Real in Madrid and the Frieze art fairs around the globe. Breguet clocks will hang inside the Albert Hall.

Holstein-based **Oris** shared news of a union with the Ligue de Football Professionnel (LFP); the governing body that runs France’s major professional football leagues. For three seasons, Oris will be the official timekeeper of Liges 1 and 2, as well as the first sustainable partner of the two competitions organised by the Ligue de Football Professionnel.



This past August, **Rado** was the official timekeeping sponsor for the new Mubadala Citi DC Open tennis tournament; the only combined ATP-WTA 500-level tennis tournament in the world, and the fifth largest professional tennis

event in the United States. Previously called the Citi Open, it recently merged with Silicon Valley’s Mubadala tournament and brought in top-tier players, many of whom played at the most recent Wimbledon championship.

Talking Shop

In celebration of their longstanding relationship, **Hublot** and world-renowned watch retailer **Bucherer** have collaborated on two new exclusive Big Bang Unico watches. The introduction of the collaborative



timepieces marks the third time the brands have partnered to create watches that distinctly represent both Bucherer and Hublot. In addition to the releases of the Big Bang Unico Bucherer Exclusive Titanium and Ceramic model, the collaborators opened a new Hublot boutique in London’s Covent Garden.

TOOL TIME Jewelling Tool by Justin Koullapis of The Watch Club



Ruby “jewel” bearings in watches reduce wear and friction. They are fitted friction-tight into precisely sized holes in the metal plates or bridges. This also allows for adjustment to endshake, which is the amount of axial play given to a watch wheel.

The most precise tool for this job is made by the Swiss company Horia. Its little green jewel press is so ubiquitous that “Horia Tool” has now become the genericised term for this type of instrument. Based on the diameter of the jewel that is to be adjusted, the watchmaker selects the correct pusher from his graduated set, along with an appropriate stake to fit into the tool’s base. The pushers sometimes have a spring-loaded centre point, which helps to keep the jewel centred while its pressed down. The pushers and stakes have beautifully polished faces, dead parallel to each other. They have to be, because the slightest tilt could crack or shatter the jewel.

The watchmaker carefully advances the plunger by turning the knurled knob at the top of the tool. This can be fine-tuned to less than a hundredth of a millimetre. By reading the micrometer thimble, testing and checking in the watch, perfect jewel settings are achieved.


GERALD CHARLES
Swiss



MAESTRO 8.0 SQUELETTE

Ref. GC8.0-RG-06

Every watch created by Maison Gerald Charles comes from Mr. Gérard Charles Genta's original drawings. The Maestro 8.0 Squelette, Ref. GC8.0-RG-06, features the iconic Maestro case in 18K Rose Gold 4N and signature vulcanised rubber strap in a Stoned Grey colour. The bespoke calibre GCA 5482 is powered by a decentred micro-rotor in 22K Rose Gold 4N which allows the movement to be reduced to 2.6mm, making the Maestro 8.0 Squelette the thinnest timepiece in Gerald Charles collection, with an overall thickness of 8.35mm. The result is an elegant yet highly technical timepiece, which meets the uncompromising technical and aesthetic criteria of the Qualité Fleurier standard for accuracy and precision.

Maison founded by Mr. Gérard Charles Genta.

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Cheer Leaders

Watchmakers are celebrated for their precision, fastidiousness and unparalleled technical expertise, but their popular image is not, perhaps, one that is associated with a sense of play. However, some makers are looking past straightforward functionality and aesthetics, and having fun with materials and quirky designs that will put a smile on your face. From TAG Heuer's lab-grown diamonds and Gérald Genta's ritzy Disney dial to Rolex's emojis and leopard print, watch brands are embracing a new joie de vivre. *Nicholas Foulkes* reports

Growth INDUSTRY

Created in a lab, TAG Heuer's diamonds can be used in unique shapes and textures

WHAT A DIFFERENCE a year and 1.9 carats make.

In 2022 TAG Heuer launched the Carrera Plasma, showcasing what the brand calls its Diamant d'Avant-Garde technology, a marketing-friendly and less nerdy way of describing Chemical Vapour Deposition (CVD) technology. Predictably there was much hype and noise made about disruptive technology and so forth, but the idea was simple enough: to decorate a timepiece using lab-grown diamonds. There were lab-grown diamond baguette hour markers, even a few lab-grown diamonds studding the sandblasted anodised aluminum case and black ceramic bezel... but you could do the same thing with natural diamonds.

However, what you would be unlikely to do with a natural diamond is make a 2.5-carat winding crown, which this watch had. Also tricky to achieve with "real" gemstones is the way the polycrystalline dial shimmers and sparkles like fine-grade sandpaper made of minute diamond particles; the chronograph subdials are clearly delineated in black polycrystalline.

It was a technical tour de force, and as Edouard Mignon, the brand's chief



The lightweight black sandblasted aluminium case is inlaid with 48 lab-grown diamonds.



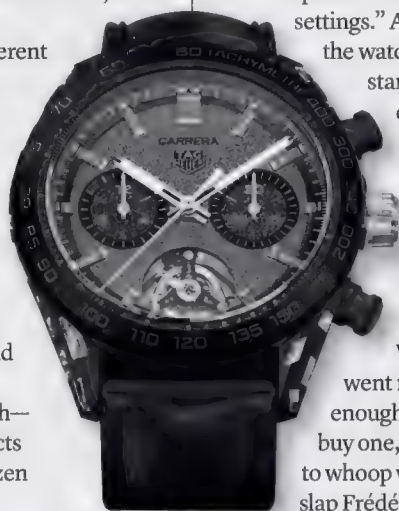
TAG Heuer Carrera Plasma
Diamant d'Avant-Garde
Chronograph Tourbillon 44mm.

"The technology enables us to explore the **VERSATILITY** of **CARBON** in the form of lab-grown diamonds."

innovation officer, explained at the time: "CVD enables us to explore the versatility of carbon in the form of lab-grown diamonds—to create a stunning timepiece where diamonds are used in very unique shapes and textures.

Lab-grown diamonds allow us to innovate and experiment with this exceptional material, and this opens up a new realm of possibilities for designers, watchmakers and engineers.”

The diamonds for this watch are cultivated all across the globe. “We have different partners, some in the US, some in Israel, some in Belgium... in many different places,” says CEO Frédéric Arnault. But even though the diamonds are man-made rather than natural, creating them is a time-consuming task. Arnault reckons that it takes around a thousand hours to grow the diamonds for one watch—and, he says, this restricts production to a few dozen pieces a year.



bigger share in the future. Our idea was not to replace natural with lab-grown diamonds, but to offer something different. And that’s when all the ideas and creativity started coming. We do things with lab-grown that we cannot do with natural diamonds, and that’s when we explored texture, shape, different settings.”

At 44mm in diameter, the watch is big by today’s standards, a deliberate choice. “We thought that to see it best, we needed to have a big watch, so it was a 44mm Carrera.”

This year the watch reappeared at Watches and Wonders again, and I went nuts for it. Not nuts enough to sell my house and buy one, but sufficiently nuts to whoop with excitement and slap Frédéric Arnault on the

back in congratulation. The head of the watch remained the same, but this year lab-grown diamonds had been sprinkled over the aluminium bracelet like glinting hundreds and thousands dusting the top of a doughnut. (Not, perhaps, the most attractive simile, but you get what I am driving at.) “With the second one, we went one step further, and placed diamonds on the bracelet. So it’s very, very visible.”

From having been merely impressive it was now also fun, cool, and chic. And for that Frédéric credits Malaika Crawford, style editor at *Hodinkee*—who, as synchronicity would have it, is a contributor to this issue of *On Time*. “When she saw the watch, she said, ‘Oh I love this idea; it is so cool. We don’t see it enough. You should also put it on the bracelet.’”

Arnault did as was suggested. It is easy to see why Malaika is a style editor. With the lab-grown diamonds scattered seemingly at random over the bracelet the watch really “pops” (as I believe style professionals say).

“The first one took everyone by surprise. It was very new,” says Arnault. “We had good demand instantly, but it was much stronger with the second one. I think there are two reasons. The first is that people are getting used to the narrative, and they see that we’re going to commit to it. The second is that I think the design is even stronger.” Such is the strength of the design that “even though the new watch is more expensive, it’s not necessarily the main issue for the type of customer who buys this watch.”

Indeed, for the money-no-object customer, the goal is sometimes to spend more, to secure the precious commodity of exclusivity. “We also offer customisation for the customer who wants something different. It comes with a premium, of course, because it is extra work. We have one customer who asked for a blue case, for example.”

The brand is already experimenting with coloured, lab-grown diamonds. So far only pink has proved stable enough to be commercially released, but I hope it will not be too long before we see a lab-grown Tutti Frutti. ■

“We do things with **LAB-GROWN** that we cannot do with natural diamonds, and that’s when we explored **TEXTURE**, shape, **DIFFERENT SETTINGS**.”

Conceptually the watch is a play on carbon: as well as the lab-grown diamonds, the Tourbillon Nanographe calibre featured a lightweight low-density carbon composite hairspring, with geometry calculated to deliver precise, perfect concentric oscillations; being made of carbon, it is also magnetic.

It was an impressive package. I respected the work that had gone into it and the sense of commercial daring required to bring out a watch, which at 350,000 Swiss francs was 100 times the price of an entry-level TAG. I liked it, but nowhere near enough to justify the six-figure price tag.

“We wanted to enter the lab-grown space because our brand values innovation,” says Arnault. “We believe that lab-grown is going to take a much



From top: TAG Heuer Carrera Plasma Tourbillon Nanographe; the crown is a single 2.5-carat lab-grown diamond, set between two black DLC-coated chronograph pushers.

We Will ROCK YOU

Rolex goes for a joy ride with its latest upbeat timepieces

"WHO KNEW ROLEX had a sense of humour?" was the rhetorical question on some lips and social media accounts at the launch of the new Day-Date 36, or to give it its full and official name, Oyster Perpetual Jigsaw Inspirational Affirmational Upbeat Joyful Emoji-Day-Date 36.

It was the Day-Date all right (fluted bezel—check; President bracelet—check; Calibre 3255 with Chronergy Escapement—check), only as you have never seen it before. The *champlevé* enamel dial depicts turquoise, tangerine, crimson, fuchsia, green and yellow jigsaw pieces, each, says the brand, "representing one of the key moments in life".

Further colour is furnished by 10 baguette-cut sapphire hours in half a dozen different hues selected according to the main background colour of the dial (tangerine for pink gold or turquoise for white and yellow). Instead of the day, the arched window at 12 o'clock offers an uplifting message: happy, eternity, gratitude, peace, faith, love and hope. Instead of the date, there is a carousel of 31 different emojis circling under the cyclops lens, including a smiley, a heart, a smiley with heart eyes, a panda, a peace sign and the most universally understood good-life emoji of all, the Rolex crown.

There is a generation of horological commentators for whom this was all a bit of a shock. I daresay some of the more technically minded conspiracy theorists were imagining that this had been conjured up by AI as some elaborate hoax, rather like those pictures of the Pope in a puffer coat. But those of us who are a bit older can confirm that Rolex does like to shake things up every 15 or 20 years. Back at the beginning of the century, in 2004, the Crown launched a watch that was even more daring, the Leopard Daytona, featuring a leopard-print dial,



The Rolex Emoji Day-Date 36 in Everose gold has 31 emojis instead of dates.

hooded diamond-set lugs, diamond hour markers, cognac sapphire-set bezel and leopard-print strap. A couple of years later the Rolex safari park welcomed the Zebra, known officially as the Datejust Royal Black. Seldom had so much funkiness been fitted into a 36mm Rolex: diamond zebra stripe dial, bezel set with black sapphire baguettes and stingray and rubber strap,

set with more diamonds. I asked Rolex boss Jean-Frédéric Dufour about the inspiration



From left: Rolex Leopard Cosmograph Daytona; Rolex Zebra Oyster Perpetual Datejust 36.

"The Day-Date has become a **UNIVERSAL WATCH** and ladies are more open to **CHANGE**."

behind the Emoji-Day-Date, and he said, "With icons, sometimes you need to rock them up, otherwise they become too much of an icon. The Day-Date, which originally was a watch only dedicated to males, has become a universal watch and ladies are more open to change." Also, he felt that in dark times we could all do with a little cheering up. "We told ourselves that after Covid, bringing out a watch that represents the paths of life as different parts of a puzzle with some messages and nice emojis makes the whole thing quite romantic. But it has been made by respecting all the craftsmanship around the enamel work and the *champlevé* technique... so it's a serious watch." Let us not forget that at Rolex, even raising a smile is an extremely serious business. ■

Happy TORQUE

Liberated from their fixed settings, Chopard's diamonds are free to dance

IT ALL BEGAN with a woodland walk in the Black Forest during the mid-1970s. Ronald Kurowski was strolling among the trees when his gaze lighted upon a waterfall at just the same time as a shaft of golden sunlight pierced the forest canopy, catching a myriad droplets of water hanging in the air. As if fired by an inner light, they shimmered, seeming to dance, throwing off the colours of the rainbow.

It's the sort of sight that moves poets to pen sonnets and has artists reaching for their brushes to capture a moment of beauty. Kurowski was neither poet nor painter. However, he did work for Chopard as a designer. Today you'd probably call him an artistic director, but five decades ago times were simpler and Kurowski turned his mind and hand to all manner of creative tasks. Sometimes he would dress the boutique windows; on other occasions, such as on this rural ramble, he would design

products destined to have an enduring impact, not merely on Chopard, but the wider watch industry.

Standing in front of that waterfall, he was struck by the idea of creating a watch that replicated this natural phenomenon. His idea was to liberate diamonds from the settings that kept them in fixed positions and instead have them roam free, sparkling, randomly, spontaneously as the light caught them.

He decided to harness the decorative power of his idea for a man's watch. During the disco days of 1976, men's watches were at their most exuberant, with gem-set pieces worn by jet-set men who lived life as if it were one long

Harold Robbins novel. The first Happy Diamonds watch had a TV-screen-shaped case and a gold central dial showing the time, set into an onyx dial around which the roving diamonds performed an ever-changing dance of light. It so perfectly captured the spirit of the times that it carried off the Golden

Rose of Baden-Baden, a prize bestowed by the Society of Friends of Precious Stones of Germany.

Karl-Friedrich Scheufele, Chopard's current co-president and an 18-year-old apprentice at the time, recalls that "the design was chosen under the condition that we execute the idea of what he imagined to be moving



Chopard Happy Diamonds watches from the 1970s.



Above: Chopard Happy Sport sketch from 1993. Left: The 30th-anniversary Chopard 33mm ladies' Happy Sport watch.

diamonds. So the first Happy Diamonds watch was actually a gents' watch he designed with 30 moving diamonds surrounding the dial." It was Karl-Friedrich's mother Karin, matriarch of the family firm, who came up with the name when she observed "these diamonds are happier because they are set free".

The principle was simple enough: dial and crystal sandwiching free-spinning diamonds. But while simple to grasp it was difficult to construct, because of the innate hardness of diamonds. "It became a very technical exercise because we had to find a way that diamonds would not scratch everything they came into contact with. Diamonds are a lot harder than onyx, harder than sapphire crystal, harder than gold. So the idea was to set each single one in a tiny tube that would be closed underneath, so it was only the gold tubes running around on the onyx surface. A lot of prototypes had to be made until we finally found the solution."

With a technical solution devised, Happy Diamonds soon made their way into jewellery thanks to Karl-Friedrich's younger sister Caroline, who designed a clown featuring a transparent stomach filled with gems. And it was Caroline who devised what has since become the defining Happy Diamond watch: the Happy Sport, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year. "Caroline had this idea of combining the stainless

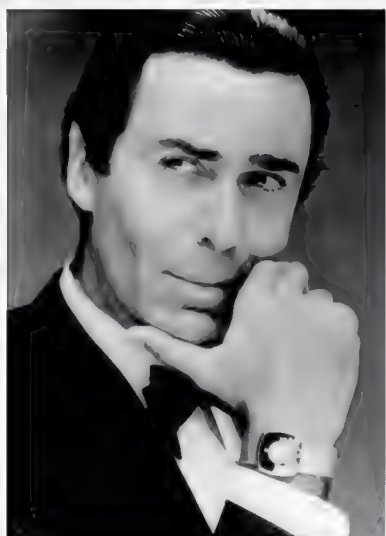
steel with happy diamonds in a more sporty way that you could wear swimming and playing tennis or for a business meeting and an evening out.”

At the beginning of the 1990s, the concept of a diamond-decorated sports watch was an oxymoron. The Happy Sport, as wearable with jeans as with a ballgown, did much to change that attitude. It also required a leap in Happy Diamonds technology. Anyone who has ever met Caroline knows that she is the definition of a free spirit in pursuit of

hermetic compartment in which the diamonds could enjoy unfettered movement. The result was an exuberant and informal yet decorative watch that captured the zeitgeist, prefiguring such trends as sport-elegance and athleisure.

Although dating back three decades the original drawings of the Happy Sport remain very contemporary-looking: a soft, supple “pebble-link” bracelet; lugs and winding crown set with cabochon sapphires; and of course the joyous dancing septet of diamonds moving

“No longer content with stones just **SPINNING** around the edge of the dial, Caroline wanted **DIAMONDS** to **SKITTER** and skate across the whole face.”



happiness and the way she saw it, those diamonds could be freer and happier. No longer content with stones just spinning around the edge of the dial, she wanted diamonds to skitter and skate across the whole face of the watch. Once again, the principle was straightforward: the Happy Sport would require a “multi-storey” crystal providing an

unimpeded around the whole dial, caught up as the brand puts it “in an animated dance recalling the whirlwind of life itself”.

But, although it is a happy watch, making it is a serious business. Karl-Friedrich enumerates a list of innovations that has seen the movement of the watch develop from a perfectly adequate, but rather standard, quartz calibre to a brand-new, in-house, self-winding movement. And improvements continue to be introduced all the time; for instance, next year the Happy Sport will acquire a new crystal which, for the first time, can be given an anti-reflective treatment.

And the diamonds? They keep getting happier. In recent years there have been tourbillons and chronographs for the horologically minded; Happy Snowflakes for skiers; Happy Fish and Happy Ocean for beachwear; even a Happy Palm to celebrate Chopard’s links with the Cannes Film Festival.

Given that there is now a Happy Sport for almost every conceivable activity, situation or location, it is hardly surprising that 30 years after its launch the Happy Sport is, to quote Karl-Friedrich, “the most successful Chopard watch in terms of the numbers sold each year.” ■

Disney TIME

Two icons—Mickey Mouse and Gérard Genta— are united by Louis Vuitton

THE WATCH INDUSTRY loves a good anniversary. In fact, the only thing it loves more than a good anniversary is two good anniversaries, which is what the recently relaunched Gérard Genta brand will be celebrating at this year’s Only Watch auction, high watchmaking’s answer to the Venice Biennale.

It is 50 years since the first watch was issued under the Genta name in 1973, and the centenary of the Walt Disney company falls on October 16, just a few days before the auction on November 5. If you really wanted to, you could also add that it is 40 years since the opening of the Tokyo Disney Resort—but you get the drift: big year for Disney, big year

for Genta, and they have shared history.

There have been Mickey Mouse timepieces for



From top: Gérard Genta gold octagonal Mickey Mouse watch from the 1990s; Gérard Genta.





Right: the Gérald Genta Only Watch 2023 design plays on the heritage of Mickey Mouse. **Above:** face and bridge of the Gérald Genta watch.

years; anniversary alert—the first one appeared 90 years ago in 1933. But it was Genta who took them upmarket, although not without a struggle. When he attempted to show them at the Montres et Bijoux exhibition in Geneva, his widow Evelyne recalls, “the CEO of a big Swiss watch company said, ‘Mr Genta, you cannot show these. They are not dignified for the Swiss watch industry. Why don’t you show your beautiful perpetual calendar?’ Gérald got very upset, and said, ‘How dare you criticise Walt Disney, he gave more happiness to the world than all of you together.’ By then the Swiss TV cameras had heard all this commotion and started filming it. He then said, ‘OK, if you don’t want my Miceys, I’m leaving.’”

Attitudes have changed a bit, explains Louis Vuitton watch boss Jean Arnault, who is relaunching the Genta brand under the aegis of LV watchmaking facility La Fabrique du Temps (LFDT). The idea, he says, is to take back the heritage of Mickey Mouse. “Mickey Mouse will remain in the Gérald Genta catalogue but as a special watch, not part of the current collection, not something that you can find easily.” He intends that “Mickey Mouse will be exclusive to these kinds of unique pieces.”

And this watch, a minute repeater with jumping hour and retrograde minutes, is about as unique as is possible. The enamel “happy birthday” dial, complete with cake, candles, party streamers, party hat and cursive Gérald Genta signature, is of course date-specific and unlikely to be repeated. But great care has also been taken to make a movement worthy of both Genta and Disney. It was designed by LFDT’s master watchmakers Michel Navas and Enrico Barbasini—both of whom, by happy



From top: designers of the Gérald Genta Only Watch 2023, Michel Navas and Enrico Barbasini of La Fabrique du Temps.

coincidence, used to work for Gérald Genta. “The retrograde jumping-hour minute repeater was one of the first movements they used to do when they were at Genta,” says Arnault.

Initially the idea had been to make this movement for Louis Vuitton watches, but once the Gérald Genta project got under way, it was obvious that it needed to become a Genta calibre. “We made a few tweaks to really make it fully a Gérald Genta

movement with Genta aesthetics,” explains Arnault. “We have an octagonal-shaped bridge for the governor which harks back to the case. And then we also have the hammer bridge, which looks a bit like a koala: that bridge was actually present in Genta minute repeaters pieces back in the 1980s.”

This is pretty recondite stuff. I have checked and, unsurprisingly, there is no mention of a “koala bridge” in my copy of Berner’s canonical quadrilingual *Dictionnaire Professionnel Illustré de l’Horlogerie*. But what really demonstrates the truly obsessive level of detail is the care that has been taken to recreate the tactile and aural sensation of winding a Gérald Genta.

“We were very cautious about making sure that the winding would be as satisfactory as possible, with the right kind of clicking sound,” Arnault explains. “So although it’s not the most technically advanced way to do it, in the sense that there’s a lot of friction and there’s a lot of energy lost, we use a specific mechanism to ensure that we have a super-satisfying click and touch to it, that is very tactile, very horological, the same way mechanical Gentas were back in the day. We may have better winding systems today, but the winding systems of the time actually sound and feel better. So we decided to go two steps back technologically to make sure.” In case you are interested, the winding sensation is based upon that of a 1980s Gérald Genta pocket watch, but I am sure you would have recognised that as soon as you turned the winding crown.

And as well as such refinements as the authentic koala bridge and retro winding system, the eventual purchaser will own one crucial set of further horological bragging rights. “As our first piece, we needed to test everything,” says Arnault. “So, Michel [Navas] himself actually assembled the entire moment and made the gongs for the minute repeater. Things that he hasn’t done in many, many, many years.” It is hard to imagine Gérald Genta—or, for that matter, Walt Disney—being anything but delighted with the result. ■

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A black and white portrait of a man with dark hair and a light beard, looking off to the side. He is wearing a dark jacket over a dark shirt. A watch with a metal bracelet is visible on his left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

LOUIS VUITTON

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Time of YOUR LIFE

Meeting extreme sportsmen or defying gravity now forms part of the deluxe purchase

By Tracey Llewellyn

A DECADE OR SO AGO, buying a luxury watch was a very different experience. You visited a store, where you were schmoozed to varying degrees, ranging from being offered champagne to a complimentary strap or travel pouch. You handed over your cash and left with a shiny new timepiece and a stamped warranty.

Today, however, some consumers place less importance on material goods, and more on a demonstrable appreciation of a lifestyle—or, to put it simply, having a good time. While the new wristwatch is the goal, the added extras in terms of service and client engagement are now possibly more significant than the cost of the watch. Brands, therefore, need unique and alternative strategies that set them apart and meet the demands and expectations of an ever-evolving customer base.

As far back as the 18th century, watchmakers have fostered personal relationships with clients, enabling them to collaborate on the creation of their timepieces in terms of materials used and complications added. This is a tradition continued today, with artisan horologists from Roger W. Smith and Struthers Watchmakers to F.P. Journe and Kari Voutilainen working with top customers on individual pieces.

The tradition has also survived with some high-end manufacturers, including Audemars Piguet and Patek Philippe, allowing models to be personalised, while Vacheron Constantin's bespoke Les Cabinotiers department

Sailing trips are available on Panerai's restored 1936 yacht Eilean.



Clockwise from right: Panerai Radiomir Eilean Experience Edition; Vacheron Constantin Les Cabinotiers x Le Louvre Museum Rubens; Simon Le Bon on Panerai's yacht Eilean for *Vanity Fair On Time*, 2014.



One of the most recent brands to throw open its doors is Oris, which now offers clients a Holstein Factory Experience consisting of a tour of the manufacture with the chance to explore the brand's origins in the Waldenburg valley via a dedicated exhibition space. Speaking of the new open house, co-CEO Rolf Studer says, "Our watches are statements in themselves, but it is important to share with our customers where they come from. In encouraging our clients to embrace the world of Oris, our factory is open to the public. This is not an expectation but an opportunity to showcase who we are and what we stand for from our home in Holstein."

British brand Bremont also offers tours of its manufacture. The brand charges £25 per person for the opportunity to visit its Henley-based facility known as The Wing, with net proceeds being donated to London's Air Ambulance Charity.

Keen to share its links with other British engineering companies, Bremont also offers unique opportunities to get up close with its partner brands. In the

draws on the brand's expertise to deliver customers' dream watches. The buyers immerse themselves in the world of watchmaking through VIP visits to the manufactures—a world rarely seen or available to the general public.

Catherine Rénier, Jaeger-LeCoultre CEO, feels that by meeting the artisans in person, clients can properly appreciate their work.

"We believe we need to go further in the experience our clients have with our maison—it is not only about the watch any more, but also about the whole journey of owning a new timepiece," she says.





From left: Zenith zero-gravity experience on an Air Zero G plane; Zenith Defy 21 Double Tourbillon Sapphire.

past, these have included events with Jaguar and Martin Baker. More recently, to celebrate its position as timing partner of Formula 1 team Williams Racing, Bremont introduced a limited-edition set of two watches that was offered with a race-day experience at Williams headquarters, including a tour of the facility with visits to the museum and the Grand Prix “mission control” room.

With watch brands sponsoring sports, film and music events, as well as engaging stars as ambassadors, there is plenty of scope for inviting clients to concerts, premieres, sporting highlights and exhibitions. But the leader of the pack when it comes to creating unique, money-can’t-buy customer experiences has to be Panerai.

Since 2019, the Italian-Swiss brand has offered limited-edition watches at a premium price point (often twice the retail value) with a physical experience attached. These have included free-diving in French Polynesia with record-breaker Guillaume Néry, scaling a mountain in Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park with professional climber Jimmy Chin, training with the Italian navy’s special forces and a multi-day adventure with Brabus, builder of Shadow Black Ops powerboats. More sedate experiences range from a trip along the Amalfi Coast aboard Panerai’s fully restored 1930s William Fife classic yacht, *Eilean*, and a Perpetual

Calendar Platinumtech Experience, which involves three days discovering “the real Italian lifestyle” in Florence.

Panerai’s experience watches were the brainchild of CEO Jean-Marc

Pontroué, who believes in offering access to something that is typically inaccessible, such as training with special military forces. Describing the opportunities as “priceless”, he says, “In the competitive landscape of luxury timepieces, I think it takes something more than just offering a

remarkable timepiece. What distinguishes Panerai is our innovative approach—we want to offer an experience that allows customers to fully engage with the brand’s adventurous ethos and dynamic performance, while cultivating a community of enthusiasts that not only wear our watches but live our brand.”

Pontroué intends to continue with the concept, believing it creates a far stronger connection with the client than simply providing a great timepiece.

“Those who find themselves captivated by our timepieces are equally entranced by the adventurous journey that accompanies them,” says Pontroué. “Its resounding success and

positive reception from our customers have made it a hallmark of our brand. Without a doubt, we will continue offering about five specially crafted experiences per year, each one carefully created to reflect our pillars.”

Possibly the most extreme experience watches to date, however, are the Zenith Defy Zero-G Sapphire and Defy 21 Tourbillon Sapphire. Just 10 examples of each were made. The two models offer their own mechanical methods of defying the effects of gravity, namely a patented gimbal or a double tourbillon.

The 20 lucky owners of the timepieces, which cost £135,000 and £152,000 respectively, each received the opportunity to experience zero gravity during a parabolic flight at Novespace, a subsidiary of the French



From left: Oris Aquis Date Calibre 400; buyers can visit the Oris quality-control department.

Space Agency in Bordeaux. Zenith may not have taken its clients to the moon and back, but the flight consisted of 15 parabolas, where an aeroplane ascends then plunges in a freefall to reproduce the effect of weightlessness.

While a premium-priced trip to Polynesia or an out-of-this-world flight may not be a deal-breaker for every watch client, there is no denying that experiences which position them at the centre of their own stories may well become the deciding factor for what timepiece people decide to buy. As more look for added value to their purchases, it could be time to throw out the rulebook and rewrite the codes of luxury watch shopping. ■



From left: Bremont Williams Racing FW44 Classic, part of a limited-edition racing experience boxset; on site at Williams Racing.



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Grape EXPECTATIONS

Wines mature on a far longer timescale than the split-second precision of horology. *Wei Koh* meets the watchmakers branching out into viniculture



"IN MANY WAYS our vineyard is our fourth child," says Christine Scheufele, wife of Chopard's co-president Karl-Friedrich Scheufele. I'm ensconced with the two of them at Chez Bacchus, the cosy wine-lovers' restaurant opened by them and run by their son, the serious oenophile Karl-Fritz Scheufele, discussing Château Monestier La Tour, the vineyard in Bergerac they acquired in 2012. Such is their devotion to this "fourth child" that they've just cut short their 29th wedding anniversary celebrations to decide how to deal with weather that may affect their grapes.

"Your relationship with a vineyard is completely different from that of a home that you decide to visit when you want," says Karl-Friedrich. "Here the vineyard decides." Christine agrees: "As the owner of a vineyard, the weather has an altogether different significance to you. Is it too hot? Too cold? Will the hail destroy your grapes by bruising their skins or damaging their flesh? You think about all these things all the time."

Their vineyard follows biodynamic principles, eschewing chemicals and heavy-handed techniques such as racking and fining, and entrusts the creation of the wine largely to



nature. I mention that this reminds me of the journey the Scheufeles embarked on 27 years ago to transform Chopard into an in-house manufacture; they always seem to choose the more difficult—but more rewarding—path.

Karl-Friedrich demurs with a chuckle. "Well, I guess you are right." In 1996 Scheufele laid the

foundations of an in-house manufacture that has allowed him to master watchmaking complications from the chronograph to the perpetual calendar to the tourbillon to the minute repeater. His quest for excellence has allowed him to set performance benchmarks,



Above: Karl-Friedrich Scheufele at Château Monestier La Tour, and its vineyards.
Left: Chopard L.U.C. Full Strike.



with COSC-certified tourbillons and the achievement of a groundbreaking Geneva Grand Prix-winning minute repeater with sapphire crystal gongs.

The Scheufeles fell in love with the Bergerac region on their honeymoon in 1994. A week after they got married, they arrived at their friend Kim Wempe's wedding in the area. In typical style, Christine and Karl-Friedrich arrived in an open-top vintage Bentley.

GRAPES: GOSKY/SHUTTERSTOCK; SCHEUELE: ALEXANDRA PAULI/CHATEAU MONESTIER LA TOUR/CHOPARD; VINEYARD: ALAIN VACHELON/CHATEAU MONESTIER LA TOUR/CHOPARD; WATCH: CHOPARD; WINE: CHATEAU MONESTIER LA TOUR/CHOPARD.

"The wines of Bergerac had never attained any great fame for one very good reason," says Karl-Friedrich. "In order for them to reach a port to be distributed to the world, they had to pass through Bordeaux. As you can imagine, the powers-that-be in Bordeaux did not consider it a priority to promote Bergerac wines." But Karl-Friedrich and Christine were inspired by their relationship with perhaps the most mythical wine in the world, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, and the man who has guided it unfailingly for half a century, Aubert de Villaine. Karl-Friedrich, who is the French-Swiss distributor of this extraordinary vineyard, says, "Domaine de la Romanée-Conti is incredibly understated about its achievements; it was one of the earliest adopters of biodynamics, but doesn't proclaim it. This is the hard way to make wine, because you let the full expression of the terroir and the weather shape the character of the wine. You don't manipulate it. You don't seek to control it. But

when you get it right the results are extraordinary."

"It all depends on God," agrees former Richemont CEO Alain Dominique Perrin, "and God is a difficult guy. So much depends on weather and with climate change today it is difficult. This year, for example, was a beautiful year, but at the end of June and for the first couple of weeks of July we had too much rain, which gave us a problem with mildew. Although we dealt with it, we will lose about 20 percent of the crop." But he has had time to become accustomed to dealing with the difficult guy upstairs. Of all the luminaries in the watch world, it is Perrin that has the longest relationship with winemaking.

Perrin bought Château Lagrézette in Cahors in 1981, when he was running Cartier, the brand he rebuilt and led from the 1970s to the 1990s. And he would do for the château and its wine what he did for Cartier.

What would ensue would be a passionate restoration of the château—a listed building from around 1400, enriched during the Renaissance and with some of the most intricate wall carvings in the region.

It was the château that attracted him, and he did not realize that it had once been a vineyard until the sale was quite advanced. "There was no vineyard any more. But when I signed for the castle, the notary told me there were three and a half hectares of plantation rights, so this is how it started. The first thing I planted was Le Pigeonnier, a 2.8-hectare parcel." His first harvest was in 1985 and the wine won a gold medal. "We started with about 20,000 bottles, now it is 650,000," says Perrin.

Cahors may not be the most glamorous of winemaking areas, as Perrin admits. "It can be a rough wine, but if you do it properly, like we do, it is a beautiful Malbec. This is where Malbec was born, and wine has been made here since the 8th century." With time Perrin's wine has lifted the perception of the area's Malbecs. (Wine must contain a minimum of 70 percent of a

"I was creating **MACHINES** that gave the time, but he was creating **WINE** that also kept time."

Clockwise from right: a 1985 Pasha de Cartier from Perrin's time at Cartier; Château Lagrézette and its Malbec; Alain Dominique Perrin.



specific grape variety to meet the appellation standards.)

Since 1988 Perrin has worked with the legendary winemaker Michel Rolland. “He’s a great guy. He’s the king and helped me make Lagrezette so famous. It is now the best Malbec in the appellation.” In the wine world, Rolland’s fame is almost the equivalent of Perrin’s in the realm of watches and jewellery. Estates where Rolland enacted his signature magic include Château Angélus in Bordeaux, Harlan Estate in California and Ornellaia in Tuscany. Before Perrin, Cahors wines were considered rough and tannic. Working with Rolland he has put the region’s wines on the map and, most importantly, the palates of sophisticated oenophiles.

ONE SUCH OENOPHILE is Jean-Claude Biver, former president of LVMH’s watchmaking division. “My fascination with wine began when I was three years old,” he explains. “When I was a child my grandfather, who was from Beaujolais, would mix a tiny amount of the regional wine into water. This, he would say, was to educate my palate about wine. He told me you should never *consume* wine; you should always taste it and try to remember the flavour. Wine is not made for drinking, he said, it is made for discovery. He would always ask me ‘What wine is it?’ My grandmother would always mouth the names of the wine to me and I would pretend I knew. He would say bravo!”

Before purchasing his own vineyard, Biver was known as a collector of rare Patek Philippe watches, and older vintages of Château d’Yquem, the legendary Sauternes. “I started collecting Château d’Yquem in 1976,” he says. “Why? I bought it in order to own a wine that my grandfather didn’t know and didn’t enjoy, because he was in Burgundy and was not a fan of sweet wine. So when I got married I served Yquem a bit to provoke my grandfather,

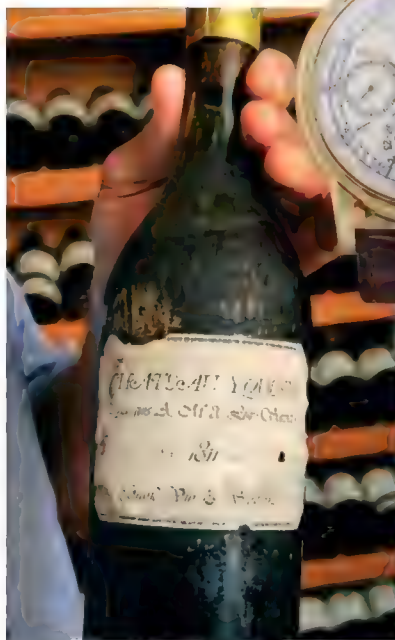
to show him I had grown up and my taste was different from his. But then when my friends saw me drinking Yquem that was 10 years old, they explained that I was drinking the wine too young—it should be 50 or 60 years old. This was fascinating to me, that wine could age and transform in such a magical way. So I started to collect

older vintages of Yquem, which at the time was not as expensive as today.

“Later, when I started Blancpain, I would meet Alexandre Lur Saluces, the owner of Yquem, and he said that we should work together because we were both creating time machines—I was creating machines that gave the time, but

he was creating wine that also kept time, that is the memory of the past. We helped each other break into the mainland Chinese market by hosting joint events.” Today Biver makes a

From left: 1811 bottle of Château d’Yquem; Patek Philippe Perpetual Calendar Chronograph Ref. 2499 once owned by Jean-Claude Biver.



From left: Biver Minute Repeater Carillon Tourbillon; Jean-Claude Biver; Domaine De La Poneyre La Tour-De-Peilz Grand Cru Chasselas.

remarkably authentic but humble wine, the Swiss white varietal known as Chasselas. He explains, “Chasselas is the king of Swiss white wines. I can have Chardonnay or Pinot Noir in Burgundy. I wanted to concentrate on what makes Swiss wine unique and special. This is why I wanted to focus on this.”

I FIRST BECAME aware of Richard Mille’s affection for wine when he held a 25th-

anniversary event for the McLaren F1 in Bordeaux. The parallels between the radical automobile designed by Gordon Murray and Mille’s timepieces, which revolutionised the modern watch industry, were clear.

But they were made far more salient with a seemingly limitless quantity of excellent wine. Even then I didn’t expect Ray Bellm, the racing driver who convinced Ron Dennis to let him bring the F1 to the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1995, to be so blown away by the lightness of the RM 50-03 Tourbillon Split-Seconds Chronograph McLaren F1 that he accidentally fumbled it and dropped it on the floor. This was even before the wine-tasting at Cheval Blanc and Cos

d'Estournel had begun. As abject terror crept into Bellm's face, thinking of the dollar value of the timepiece, I'll never forget Mille's head of communication Tim Malachard saying, "Don't worry, Richard used to do that intentionally to demonstrate the shock resistance of the watch." Bellm cheekily replied, "Would you like me to drop it again?" Everyone in the vicinity turned to him with their hands outstretched and said "No!"

The afternoon's hilarity only increased when we found ourselves on the side of the road in Bordeaux, waiting for the support vehicle to fix a damaged clutch. Most of the other drivers had pulled over to join us. Soon their thirst began to build and they remembered that I had bought a case of 1982 Estournel, which they convinced me to open. Let's just say this went down very well in the late afternoon sun.

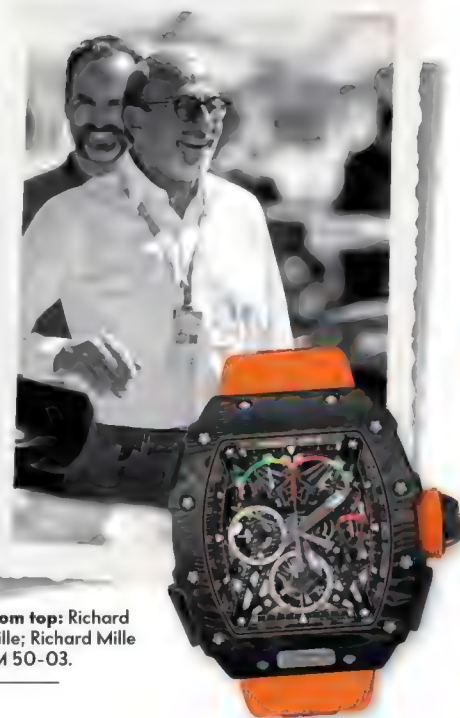
In 2019 Mille's passion for wine inspired him to purchase an estate of his own, the 35-hectare vineyard Château Rêva, located in La Motte between Cannes and Aix-en-Provence. Rêva primarily produces rosé, with the remainder split between red and white wines. In addition to highly drinkable wines, Rêva—which Mille is in the process of turning biodynamic—boasts

From left: Laurence Graff; Delaire Graff Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve; Graff Lace watch; Delaire Graff Estate.

magnificent grounds and an 18th-century mansion. The vineyard represents an extension of Mille's luxury universe that also includes the fragrance company Henry Jacques. Mille's daughter Amanda, who oversees the vineyard, says, "My father loves special places. Since his first visit to Château Rêva, he felt its charm and beauty could fit into his world. We love to make our clients feel included in our family and Rêva is a part of this."

WHILE THE OTHERS are content to make wine, legendary jeweller Laurence Graff had a vision for something altogether more all-encompassing and spectacular. Delaire Graff Estate in South Africa features a five-star hotel, two restaurants, a renowned wellness spa and three shops, in addition to a winery that has established a reputation for stellar Cabernet Sauvignon. The view of Table Mountain on the far side of the undulating Stellenbosch vines can be described as the intersection between landscape and religious experience, such is its

transcendent beauty. "The sunsets at Delaire Graff Estate are breathtaking," says Graff. "Looking out from the deck, an orange hue envelops the entire vista, and we endeavoured to capture this exact shade in the interior design—a prelude to



From top: Richard Mille; Richard Mille RM 50-03.

the natural spectacle each evening." The evenings are filled with tastings characterised by the earthiness and elegant tannic structure indigenous to the rich soil of the Banghoek Valley.

It seems the motivations for the watch world's leaders becoming winemakers are as varied as the grapes used. In the case of the Scheufele and Perrin, they have succeeded in elevating the level of winemaking in regions traditionally looked at as mid-tier, and all three can be assured that they have accomplished as much as vigneron as they have as leaders in the luxury world. For Mille and Graff, their vineyards offer experiences that are an extension of the universes of ultra-luxury they have created. With such detail-oriented individuals, it seems that the capacity to curate the lifestyle experience for their clients even after they've left the boutique is a reward unto itself. Finally with oenophile Biver, Yquem collector *par excellence*, it is the authentic Swiss terroir and Chasselas grape that compel him to make his beloved wine. It stands almost as a symbol of commitment and gratitude to the area that has enabled him to make multiple fortunes, and to become a true legend in the watch industry. ■



MILLE: DPPI; DELAIRE GRAFF ESTATE: GRAFFS; LOSNOX/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Wheels of STEEL

From dropping beats to mastering mixes, superstar DJs—like watchmakers—are well-versed in keeping perfect time.

By Brynn Wallner

TO BECOME A truly successful DJ, one must possess perfect timing. With an intuitive sense of beatmatching, rhythm and the energy of a room, DJing is an art that demands more than an understanding of what songs move a crowd. Timing really is everything, and it therefore follows that DJs should be attracted to watches—and, if they're lucky, paid to wear them. Swiss brands have tapped into the global dance music

community—collectively valued at £8.6bn—aligning themselves with top talent based on the fact that a DJ's influence transcends the stage. Whether they are headlining festivals or playing for their fanbase at more intimate venues, these performers are perfect candidates for watch brands seeking authenticity and visibility. So in the mix of watchmakers and DJs, who has found the perfect pitch?



MARK RONSON

Last year, Audemars Piguet enlisted music producer Mark Ronson as an ambassador; a fitting partnership considering he's been wearing a Royal Oak for more than a decade. But before he got that Royal Oak, he was spinning hip-hop records in the 1990s at the downtown NYC clubs he was too young to drink in. This genre has always influenced him—down to his watch taste, too—and he was careful to give credit where it's due: "Jay-Z was obviously a little ahead of me, having collaborated with AP all the way back in 2005." Having evolved from a club kid to seven-times Grammy winner (plus one Oscar), Ronson clearly understands the importance of time in building a successful career, something he has done over a 30-year period. Audemars Piguet understands his sustained commitment, and commissioned Ronson to write and produce a song with Lucky Daye, called *Too Much*, in which Daye soulfully sings the refrain "it's about time".



CARL COX

An undisputed living legend in electronic music, Britain's own Carl Cox is a founding father of the rave scene: owning several successful record labels, regularly working as a producer and still in demand on the decks at Burning Man and Ibiza's hottest clubs. Cox's headlining talent attracted Zenith to collaborate with him on the Defy Extreme Carl Cox Edition, as well as a one-of-a-kind piece specifically for him.



STEVE AOKI

Counting nearly 3 billion music streams to his name, Steve Aoki brings a new meaning to the "multi-hyphenate" label as a twice Grammy-nominated music producer, artist, fashion designer, record-label founder and entrepreneur. Aoki has channelled his love for haute horology into a collaborative watch with Bulgari, as well as investing in Bezel app, a fully authenticated watch marketplace. Aoki cites the rapidly expanding secondary watch market as a motive for this decision. "It's a world completely built around people, like myself, who appreciate watches and collectibles in an artistic way but also as investments." If asked to wear one watch for the



rest of his life, Aoki would choose his steel Patek Philippe Ref. 5712, but his daily wear—whether he's DJing or courtside at an NBA playoff game—consists of both a Whoop and an Apple Watch. “When it comes to time, the most important factor for me is how I’m spending it,” says Aoki of his devotion to data and optimisation. And yet he artfully appreciates when to slow down, naming the down-tempo *Time* by Hans Zimmer as a current favourite.



AMRIT TIETZ

DJ and music curator Amrit Tietz is at home in any city featuring a fashion week. She could be called an influencer, but playing sets for the likes of TAG Heuer and Tiffany & Co have stemmed from a decade's worth of DJing, built upon an education at an Australian musical conservatory. In addition to becoming an in-demand DJ for watch events, she's amassed a small collection herself, currently wearing an automatic Santos de Cartier gifted her following the recent birth of her baby girl. “Time is the key to a smooth transition, which is a lot like life,” says Amrit, musing with the wisdom of a new mother on the link between DJing and timekeeping.

“Knowing when to pivot, reading the room and getting a feel for how to elevate or wind down the moment seamlessly.” For this, she recommends *I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times)* by Jamie XX, Popcaan and Young Thug.



RODGE

Lebanese DJ Rodge—Roger Saad—has more than three decades of experience in the music industry. Rodge has achieved notable success in the Middle East, founding Mix FM Lebanon and performing alongside Justin Bieber and Jennifer Lopez. On his wrist is the Alpine Eagle Chrono XL by Chopard—a brand for which he often DJs—whose multi-time-zone complication is useful when on the move. His love for haute horlogerie goes hand-in-hand with his production and DJ style: “Just as a finely crafted timepiece brings together intricate components to create a harmonious whole,” he says. “A perfect playlist should commence with a blend of sensuality and artistic expression guiding you towards a crescendo of excitement and anticipation.”



ZACK BIA

If you find yourself asking “Who is Zack Bia?”, you're a little late. Just after his 19th birthday, Bia found himself in the right place at the right time and went from an anonymous Los Angeles college kid to a promoter, record-label owner, DJ and all around It-boy. Zack Bia, now 27, is also referred to by Audemars Piguet as a “friend of the brand”, a vague title that watch companies bestow on those loosely, but officially, affiliated. Whether courtside at a Los Angeles Lakers basketball game or DJing at fashion week, Bia is rarely spotted without a Royal Oak. The balance he aims to strike on stage is “similar to a rollercoaster ride,” Bia says. “A DJ set is an experience shared by all passengers on this ride. I always have to be conscious of creating true moments to cherish, making sure the journey is timed out properly within the confines of a true beginning, middle and end.” A timely Bia favourite is *One More Time* by Daft Punk.



DJ SNAKE

French producer DJ Snake (William Sami Étienne Grigahcine) found recognition worldwide in 2013 with *Turn Down for What* featuring Lil Jon. His DJing, which started at 14, has evolved into Grammy-nominated production credits, notably for Lady Gaga's *Born This Way*. “DJ Snake turns everything he touches to gold,” says Hublot CEO Ricardo Guadalupe. The DJ's partnership with the brand began in 2018 and continues today with the collaborative Big Bang DJ Snake watch, which has its uses: “When I play, I always have a tight time slot to fit perfectly into.” ■

From left: Mark Ronson; Carl Cox wearing his Zenith; Lucky Daye; Amrit Tietz; Lady Gaga; Rodge; Young Thug; DJ Snake wearing Hublot Big Bang DJ Snake; Zack Bia; Jamie XX; Steve Aoki wearing his Bulgari watch.



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Horological HAVENS

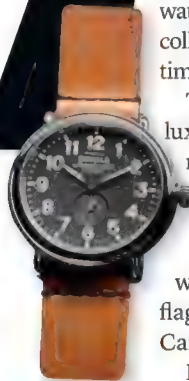
Taking time out? Be sure to tailor your wristwatch to your retreat. *By Aoife O'Riordain*

WITH EVER MORE luxury-brand-meets-hospitality crossovers—see Bulgari's burgeoning chain and American watch brand Shinola's boutique hotel in Detroit—horological tourism is trending, whether a luxurious hotel for watch lovers in the Swiss Jura, or collector-worthy special-edition resort timepieces.

The new owners of 10 of the most luxurious homes in the OWO Residences—next door to Raffles London in the Grade II*-listed, renovated Old War Office in Whitehall—were gifted a special 18-carat gold Bovet 1822 from the exclusive Swiss maker. Meanwhile, haute horlogerie maison Chopard will soon unveil a hotel on the upper floors of its Parisian flagship at 1 Place Vendôme, comprising 29 suites designed by Caroline and Karl-Friedrich Scheufele.

Here are some suggestions for time well spent around the globe.

landmarks of the Ara Pacis and the Mausoleum of Augustus, a convenient tourbillon's toss from Bulgari's flagship store on the Via Condotti. Interiors are reassuringly luxurious with sleek marble, mosaics, Murano chandeliers and a spa that takes its inspiration from the Baths of Caracalla. From the rooftop bar there are classic skyline views over the Janiculum and the dome of St Peter's Basilica. When in Rome, the only thing to sport on your wrist is the sleek Bulgari Octo Roma Chronograph. bulgarihotels.com



HÔTEL DES HORLOGERS
Switzerland

Audemars Piguet's flagship hotel opened in 2022 in the brand's hometown of Le Brassus in the Vallée de Joux, the heart of Switzerland's watchmaking region. Designed to strict sustainable principles by the cutting-edge Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), its audacious zig-zagging form mimics the alpine landscape that surrounds it. The restaurant is headed up by three-star Michelin chef Emmanuel Renaut, and next door the Musée Atelier Audemars Piguet exhibits 300 timepieces. The obvious wrist embellishment is the newest iteration of the brand's

sought-after Royal Oak series, the Self-Winding Perpetual Calendar Ultra-Thin, one of a limited edition of 200. hoteldeshorlogers.com



BULGARI ROMA
Italy

Bulgari Roma is a homecoming for the celebrated jeweller. Already with hotels in London, Dubai, Milan, Paris, Beijing and Tokyo, it has finally gone back to its roots and opened one in the Eternal City, where it all started back in 1884. The location of choice is a sprawling 1930s rationalist building on Piazza Augusto Imperatore, built during the Mussolini era, opposite the Roman



CHEVAL BLANC RANDHELI
Maldives

Designed by Jean-Michel Gathy, the LVMH-owned Cheval Blanc injected some Gallic stealth wealth to the remote Noonu Atoll, a short hop by private plane from the Maldivian capital, Malé. The thatched villas embody understated tropical chic and the Maldives' only Guerlain spa occupies its own tiny island. As befits its pedigree, the resort's concept store is more Avenue Montaigne than Maldives. It's also the only place where you can acquire the Dior Grand Bal Cheval Blanc: one of five special-edition timepieces. With a face the opalescent blue hue of the surrounding sea, studded with 131 twinkling blue sapphires representing the islands, this surely qualifies as the ultimate holiday souvenir. chevalblanc.com



BAWAH RESERVE

Indonesia

While dive computers may be the norm, a true connoisseur will also have their treasured timepiece clamped on their wrist for exploration of the deep. Coming up for air at Bawah Reserve, the views above water are almost as bewitching as the marine life teeming underneath. A cluster of six islands blanketed in verdant rainforest in Indonesia's Anambas archipelago, its sustainably built thatched and stilted bungalows are dotted all around: on the beach and in the forest. Beyond the resort, the hitherto uninhabited marine conservation area, which lies just outside Indonesia's hallowed coral triangle, is a riot of underwater sea life. Hawksbill and green sea turtles regularly nest on the reserve's 13 beaches. Elang, the six-lodge resort within a resort, is set on a small island a brief boat ride from the main hotel. Pack the new Panerai Submersible S Brabus Titanio PAM01403, which can plumb depths of up to 300m. bawahreserve.com



EDEN ROCK

St Barths

Eden Rock has come a long way from its origins as a guesthouse perched on a promontory on the Baie de Saint Jean, *pieds dans l'eau* on the perennially

fashionable Caribbean island of St Barths. Having arrived at its 70th anniversary this year and now owned by the Matthews Family, it remains the island's iconic beachside stay, having welcomed a red carpet's worth of famous faces through the decades. Leaving without sampling one of the frozen rosé cocktails—called a “frosé”—at its vibey Sand Bar is a plank-walking offence. To mark its milestone anniversary, Swiss watch brand Hublot has created 25 special-edition 2023 Big Bang Unico 45mm timepieces, inscribed with the Eden Rock logo and a palette inspired by the sun, sea and sand. oetkercollection.com



NORTH ISLAND

Botswana

Micro camps are becoming the last word for the discerning African safari-goer: two or three rooms buried in the bush, the more remote the better. Botswana stands out as one of Africa's best game-watching destinations, minus the crowds; isolation is pretty much guaranteed at the newly opened North Island on the northern fringes of the Unesco World Heritage-listed Okavango Delta. Its three tents are set on stilts with exceptional lagoon views from the large balconies. Located on the private island of Xuxuga, a mosaic of winding waterways offer views of the savannah and a lagoon of bathing hippos. Days here are spent seeking out the vast array of wildlife—including lions, cheetahs, buffalos, antelopes, elephants and the diverse birdlife—on foot, by 4x4 and in traditional mokoro canoe. Keep on track with an off-grid adventure classic such as a Rolex Explorer II. naturalselection.travel



LANSERHOF

Germany

Hi-tech healthcare meets healing at the Lanserhof Sylt, the retreat of choice for those on a quest for well-being inside and out. Ultra-personalised programmes combine cutting-edge medicine with natural and holistic practices. The area is northern Germany's answer to Martha's Vineyard and Sylt is a small island in the Frisian archipelago overlooking the Wadden Sea. Its huddle of state-of-the-art buildings bounded by rolling sand dunes are disguised under vernacular-style thatched roofs to blend into the island's architecture. Keep perfect time as you jog along the unspoilt beaches or ride the waves with the limited Sylt-Edition Breitling Superocean Heritage B20 Automatic 42—a riff on its classic diving timepiece first launched in 1957. lanserhof.com



HOTEL UNION ØYE

Norway

A historic hotel on the edge of the Norangfjord near Ålesund, the Hotel Union Øye looks like something dreamt up by a set designer. The Atlantic Ocean Road here featured in one of the car chases in the most recent Bond film, *No Time to Die*. Channel your inner secret agent with the Omega Seamaster Diver 300M 007 Edition sported by Daniel Craig in the film. unionoye.no ■

BAWAH RESERVE: EDEN ROCK; ROMAIN REIGLARD; NORTH ISLAND: NATURAL SELECTION; LANSEHOF; UNION ØYE: JOHANNA NYBORG/Ø2 NORD

An aerial photograph of a resort pool area. The pool is a large, irregular shape with a vibrant blue color, surrounded by lush greenery, including many palm trees. A winding path or walkway is visible through the pool area. In the background, there are some buildings and more greenery. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a tropical or subtropical location.

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Magic CARPET

Once all eyes were on the couture and jewellery, but now watches are taking centre stage on the red carpet, with celebrities eager to form powerful alliances with makers and maisons

By MALAIKA CRAWFORD

RED CARPETS ARE, by their very definition, pure pomp and pageantry. I experience them as a parade of the well-heeled and glamorous; a faraway fantasy world that I can indulge in as I analyse who is wearing custom, couture or runway clothing and carat-dense gemstones. And, if I'm lucky, who is wearing a watch.

In 1922, Hollywood showman Sid Grauman introduced a red carpet at the Egyptian Theatre for the premiere of *Robin Hood*. And in 1961, the red carpet was introduced at the Academy Awards as a practical way of guiding that year's nominees from their cars to the ceremony door at the event's new venue. Then, in 1964, Academy producers opted to begin the broadcast (which at the time was still being aired in black and white) with shots of nominees filtering into the auditorium via the red carpet. This is when the true pageantry really began to manifest.

Today, the red carpet functions as the primary intersection between fashion and the media. What once existed solely as a promotional platform to raise awareness about films and the actors that star in them has become a crucial communication platform for brands and celebrities. Nowadays the red carpet has evolved into a carefully orchestrated economy, where the most desirable celebrity candidates forge partnerships with luxury brands.

In her book *Fashion and Celebrity Culture*, Pamela Church Gibson points

FULLY ARMED

Clockwise from top left: Nicole Kidman at the 2023 Academy Awards; Rihanna; Ryan Gosling and his TAG Heuer; Carrera Date at the Barbie launch in Canada; Roger Federer at the Met Gala; Anya Taylor-Joy wearing Jaeger-LeCoultre at the Baftas; Ed Sheeran; Zendaya at the Bulgari Hotel Roma in 2023.

KIDMAN: ANGELA WEISS/GETTY IMAGES; RIHANNA: DANIEL VENTURELLI/GETTY IMAGES; GOSLING: MATHWU TANG/GETTY IMAGES; FEDERER: DIANTRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES FOR THE MET MUSEUM/VOGUE; TAYLOR JOY: DAVID FISHER/SHUTTERSTOCK; SHEERAN: ANGELA WEISS/ATP VIA GETTY IMAGES; ZENDAYA: DANIEL VENTURELLI/GETTY IMAGES FOR BULGARI; RED VELVET: SACTO/GETTY IMAGES

out that the red carpet is “the new catwalk of the 21st century; for many designers it has as much, if not more importance than their own couture shows and the stars pose happily, endlessly, to show off their borrowed outfits to best advantage.” The same can be said for watches and jewellery. The red carpet is now as important as any advertisement or editorial placement. Having Zendaya in a Bulgari campaign is only one layer of a meticulous marketing strategy. Zendaya, among other ambassadors, is contractually obliged to wear and be photographed in Bulgari products at promotional events and on red carpets.

RATHER PERVERSELY, ONE of the most desired outcomes is a mere 4 x 5 in photograph, to be viewed from a smartphone or in a slightly larger ratio on a laptop. A celebrity analyst, who wishes to remain anonymous, says, “Seconds after these [red-carpet] appearances happen, they get pumped out on Instagram, they get tagged, announced and spoken of, which translates into sales, particularly with the lower-tier brands.” And then there are the brand-sponsored events that cater to the wealthy. My source



FORGING ALLIANCES

From left: Bulgari Serpenti Spiga; Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Bulgari CEO Jean-Christophe Babin.
Below: TAG Heuer Carrera Date.



promotional platform by launching a couture collection. Scheufele’s concept for jewellery and watches is that they are front and centre, in contrast to the usual *modus operandi*. “A beautiful dress is a wonderful thing, but a piece of jewellery or a watch will take just as much care to design, and probably far longer to make, as well as being more of an investment,” she explains, “so with this first collection I am presenting clothes that show watches and jewellery to their best advantage, rather than having them fit in around another designer’s vision.”

her contract or detracting from the Dior-branded moment she is paid to create on the carpet.

BRANDS ALSO HAVE to ensure that the product is perfectly visible, which is far more challenging when it comes to watch and jewellery placements. The stars are tutored in exposure-maximising tactics that aren’t necessarily spelled out in their contracts, but are widely known to be highly effective.

For jewellery, hair should be worn up or behind the ears, or curled back with the index finger to demonstrate a ring or earring, with a corresponding neckline for visibility. For watches, the sleeve and cuff should be an appropriately short length, with the ability to roll the cuff with a cross of the arm and a shake of the wrist for a grand reveal; as perfectly exemplified by Ryan Gosling with his TAG Heuer Carrera Date at the *Barbie* launch in Toronto and Timothée Chalamet with his Cartier Tank at the 2022 Venice Film Festival.

You really have to look no further than the *grand maître* of wrist-to-camera positioning, Bulgari CEO Jean-Christophe Babin—his forearm is always at a 45- or 90-degree angle and it is almost impossible to find an image of him without a watch featuring prominently on his wrist.

“Seconds after these **RED-CARPET** appearances happen, they get pumped out on **INSTAGRAM.**”

went on to explain: “As well as sponsoring the Venice Film Festival, Cartier is also hosting clients, who are there for the experience of seeing the film, meeting the celebrity, seeing the jewellery on the carpet, and then buying that very jewellery. The same with Chopard at Cannes.”

Chopard has been an official partner of the Cannes Film Festival for 25 years, and this year, Caroline Scheufele, the maison’s artistic director and co-president, turned the red-carpet cavalcade into an even greater

The expansion into a line of clothing is a savvy marketing decision. Dressing stars head-to-toe in Chopard keeps it from being overshadowed, physically and metaphorically, by any other designer brand. This flight to full-look safety has also occurred at LVMH, with Dior and Louis Vuitton investing more time and money into their high jewellery lines. Now a star can wear a Dior gown with Dior jewellery and run no risk of breaching



Celebrities can fall into one of two camps: contractual ambassadors or grey-zone “friends of the brand”. A brand ambassador is typically an individual who is actively under contract with an obligation to represent it exclusively. Seasoned pros, such as long-term Omega ambassador Nicole Kidman, will be able to effortlessly render a red-carpet watch shot worth the annual retainer. These ambassadorships are underpinned by contracts requiring a specified number of appearances, which includes red-carpet appearances at film festivals, award shows, product placement in TV shows and chat-show appearances. These deals can reach \$1m and beyond.

FRIENDS OF THE brand, however, do not necessarily need to be exclusive and might only be engaged on a project basis. It could be someone who is a frequent supporter at events and might not even be paid. At the TAG Heuer Fifth Avenue store opening in New York in July, for example, Kieran Culkin and Natasha Lyonne were in attendance as friends, whereas Patrick Dempsey and Alexandra Daddario are ambassadors.

Beyond the celebrity ambassadors and friends of the brand, there are further elements of the economic ecosystem. For example, there is individual product placement for a one-time payment in exchange for a social-media post or one-off red-carpet appearance. There is generally no rubric for cost when it comes to single project red-carpet placements; they can range from as little as \$20,000 to as much as \$200,000, depending on the influencer or celebrity’s desirability and ranking. Typically this type of deal is used to push a new product—in contrast to the heavyweight VIPs, who can create desirability regardless of whether there is something new to push.

Today an ambassadorship for a brand is an important component in an actor’s CV, and increasingly the brands become film-makers in order to showcase their stars (both horological and theatrical). When Jaeger-LeCoultre named



IT'S SHOWTIME

Clockwise from top left: George Clooney; Alexandra Daddario at the TAG Heuer Fifth Avenue opening, 2023; Cardi B; Timothée Chalamet at the 2022 Venice International Film Festival; Kaia Gerber; Serena Williams and Pusha T at the Met Gala; The Weeknd at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival; Beyoncé; Cartier Tank à l'Étoile.

Anya Taylor-Joy as a new global ambassador, it made a short film, *A Call of the Heart*—which, says the brand, was “based on a symbolic phone call welcoming her into *la grande maison*”. Film-making on an altogether more lavish scale was undertaken earlier this year when Cartier made an atmospheric, Guy Ritchie-directed evocation of Parisian chic with Rami Malek and Catherine Deneuve to relaunch the Tank Française; while TAG Heuer cast Ryan Gosling and Vanessa Bayer in what it called

a “five-minute Hollywood action-comedy” celebrating Gosling’s gift for comedy as enthusiastically as the Carrera celebrates its 60th birthday.

Often what brands are looking for in a partnership at any level is a viral moment, such as designer Demna Gvasalia’s spring/summer ’22 collection for Balenciaga. Gvasalia, now famous for his social commentary, held his first post-Covid fashion show as an award-ceremony-cum-film-premiere parody at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Regular guests arrived at the show where they were promptly ushered down a red carpet flanked by photographers. None of them was aware, prior to arrival, that they would be doing so. Once the guests



CLOONEY: OMIGA; DADDARIO: RICHIE RUJO/WIREIMAGE; CARDI B: ROY ROCHLIN/WIREIMAGE; CHALAMET: STEPHANE CARONAL/GETTY IMAGES; GERBER: MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES; WILLIAMS: KARWAI TANG/GETTY IMAGES; PUSH T: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES; THE WEEKND: GISELA SCHÖBER/GETTY IMAGES; MARIAN GERARD: COLLECTION CARTIER © CARTIER

were settled down inside the theatre, they were shown a live broadcast of the selfsame red carpet they had just walked down. The audience then watched celebrities and models walking the red carpet just outside wearing looks from the new collection. Through this simulacrum, Gvasalia managed to blur the distinction between fashion, celebrity and spectacle, emphasising how fashion seems to be less and less about the clothes themselves, and highlighting the most integral component of the ecosystem: image capture and viral impact.

"Pre-social media, people just wanted to look cool," says Kate Young, a New York-based stylist whose clients include Margot Robbie and Selena Gomez. "Now, every outfit needs to be something that will look good on Instagram to get the masses chattering." Young says that her process was completely different before the now-pervasive brand deals. "I would build a wardrobe in this way: 'Let's find you the greatest black trousers and let's borrow a fabulous watch and some cool necklace that you're going to wear on every press day'—I would create more of a working wardrobe."

Young says that aside from an earlier deal Robbie had with watch brand Richard Mille, it is now impossible for her to borrow watches from bigger brands. "The few times I have tried establishing relationships with the PRs it hasn't worked," she says. It is unclear if there is a single reason behind this, but

there has been a shift. In the past, Young would have selected what she deemed "cool", but increasingly brands approach her clients directly with propositions for what they would like the public to see too. Young's job now involves finding ways of making such propositions work in line with her own aesthetic. "I just need the time to figure out what will make it look cool," she says.

Despite the red-carpet economy being overwhelmingly female-focused, women aren't usually seen wearing watches. But several notable women have worn watches to recent Met Galas: Rihanna wore a Chopard high jewellery watch with her *Comme des Garçons* runway look in 2017; Kaia Gerber wore an Omega De Ville Prestige Dewdrop in 2021 with her Oscar de la Renta gown; and Nicole Kidman, who has worn several Omega watches on the very prestigious Met Gala carpet, most recently wore a museum piece with archive Chanel at this year's gala.

Irrespective of gender, interest in watches is booming. This couldn't be more clearly demonstrated than on the red carpet. We have seen ambassadors such as Serena Williams (for Audemars Piguet), George Clooney (for Omega) and Roger Federer (for Rolex) sport timepieces for all to see at red-carpet events.

Now even more "organic" moments are closely

scrutinised: Jay-Z wearing a Patek Philippe Grandmaster Chime on more than one public occasion; Kid Cudi in a Ben Baller bust-down G-Shock at the Met Gala; Ed Sheeran in a Patek Philippe Perpetual Calendar Ref. 1518 at the MTV Video Music Awards; Drake in his gem-set Patek Philippe Nautilus; The Weeknd at Cannes wearing a Piaget Limelight Gala ladies' watch; Pusha T in a Rolex Day-Date; Frank Ocean in his Richard Mille RM 37-01 Automatic Kiwi; Bad Bunny sporting vintage Patek Philippe ladies' timepieces on and offstage; and Cardi B in her famous diamond-smothered Patek Philippe Nautilus.

A S A STYLIST, my enthusiasm for red-carpet outfits and watches is undeniably much higher in reference to red-carpet moments from a bygone era. And I'm not even talking about Joan Crawford wearing floor-length sable during Hollywood's Golden Age, or even Cher's eternally perfect custom Bob Mackie Grammy and Oscar outfits from the 1970s. I'm referencing the carpet of the 1990s: Elizabeth Hurley in safety-pinned Versace, and Stella

McCartney and Liv Tyler in T-shirts at the Met Gala. Even the early 2000s Joan and Melissa Rivers' live reporting of the carpet on *E!* is still a thrill to rewatch. There are now numerous Instagram accounts solely dedicated to this popular form of red-carpet nostalgia.

Red carpets are not solely *de facto* catwalks; they could also be thought of in the same way as sporting events—as an occasion for which commentary and discussion involves not just a select few, but the public at large. The red-carpet pomp and pageantry of old has been supplemented by the modern phenomenon of the heavily branded messaging and not-so-subliminal product placement. What celebrities are wearing on their wrists is now newsworthy and demonstrates our obsession with fame. What is for sure is that the impact of red-carpet culture, and its expression through watchmaking, is here to stay. ■



HOUSE PROUD

Above: Omega De Ville Prestige.
Below: Natalia Vodianova, Eva Herzigova, Caroline Schaufele, Naomi Campbell and Helena Christensen at Chopard's couture fashion show.



WATCHES

of the Year

From delicate elegance to rugged functionality, today's timepieces exhibit an astonishing variety of styles, moods and contexts. Allow *On Time's* experts to guide you through the most desirable new pieces

High fantasy

By VIVIANNE BECKER

THE COUTURE OF HORLOGERIE, the lavishly bejewelled, one-of-a-kind evening watch, has raised its profile in high jewellery collections. This season's most exquisite jewellery watches showcase couture characteristics: superlative materials, sophisticated craftsmanship and a touch of extravagant fantasy.

Combining the maison's twin creative forces of gardening and dressmaking, Dior's Les Jardins de la Couture collection includes a sublimely exuberant secret watch, with gem-set flowers and green lacquer leaves growing around a pink sapphire dial-cover. In Cartier's Le Voyage Recommencé high jewellery collection, the Tutti Lodi secret watch reimagines a Mughal garden—the essence of imperial good living—via a huge carved emerald dial-cover, from

This season's **MOST EXQUISITE** *watches* *showcase* **A TOUCH OF FANTASY.**

which burst the much-loved Tutti Frutti carved-gem fruits and foliage.

Gardens, albeit of the underwater variety, are also a theme at Bulgari, where one of the highlights of the Mediterraneo collection is the spectacular Giardino Marino Grande timepiece, alive with gem-smothered shells, starfish, fish and quivering sea anemones, mounted *en tremblant*; a tour de force, it took 3,900

hours to make. An exotic fish studded with emeralds, diamonds and paraiba tourmalines protects the dial, beneath which beats the tiny, proprietary Piccolissimo movement.

Taking a stylised view of nature in its Metaphoria collection, Piaget pays homage to mid-century modernism with the luscious Alata cuff watch, layering leaves of gold, diamonds and mother of pearl around a dial ornamented with the signature Palace Décor engraving.

Going full-on couture, Chanel translates Coco's favourite fabric into precious gems, in the Tweed de Chanel High Jewellery collection that features a striking secret cuff watch, weaving malachite with diamonds, pearls and gold rope-chain details.

The new Tiffany 57 watch celebrates the re-opening of the maison's landmark Fifth Avenue store in New York. The lavishly diamond-set design is inspired by the architecture of Washington Square, including the hexagonal honeycomb pavement, and by the shape

BACKGROUNDS: GLUKI/SHUTTERSTOCK; HYBRID: GRAPHICS/SHUTTERSTOCK



and numerals of early pocket watches in the Tiffany archives. Similarly classic in form, Harry Winston's one-of-a-kind Premier Night Prism celebrates connoisseurship and craftsmanship, delivering a 3D kaleidoscopic effect through the meticulous invisible-setting of baguette diamonds and sapphires, with the impressive 36mm case on a midnight-blue satin strap.

Three new adaptations of Jaeger-LeCoultre's class classic, the diminutive 101, embody living luxuriously: two one-of-a-kind, updated models of the 101 Bangle, with a sweeping open-ended ribbon-like silhouette, one all in diamonds with a carnelian lacquer dial, the other in diamonds and sapphires, with brilliant white dial. The entirely new 101 Secrets is a scintillating rivière of light, a double row of diamonds bordering a central diamond-set trail in which the minute dial is cunningly secreted.

Just as dazzling is the new high jewellery model of Hermès's Nantucket, the rectangular case with its anchor chain details and the slinky bracelet now completely diamond-smothered in a refined snow-setting, so that light ripples over the watch.

Even the classic Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore Selfwinding Chronograph has been given a couture makeover: each of the four new iterations is dressed up in gem-set bezels, including a rainbow-hued model. I love the pink gold and diamond version with its silky light blue new Lady Tapisserie dial, the ultimate good-life accessory. The only worry is choosing between the beige and the blue rubber strap...

FEELING HAUTE

Clockwise from top left: Bulgari Giardini Marino Grande Secret; Jaeger-LeCoultre Calibre 101 Bangle; Piaget Alata; Tiffany 57 Unique Piece; Chanel Tweed Contrasté; Hermès Nantucket Sergi Neige; Harry Winston Premier Night Prism Automatic; Cartier Le Voyage Recommencé Secret; Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Selfwinding Chronograph; Dior Les Jardins de la Couture Secret.

Special features

By JACK FORSTER

PENDULUMS, AS ANY student of horology will tell you, swing. While the hyperwatch came and went, watchmaking never lost its fascination with the pleasure of complexity both for its own sake, and for what it can offer in terms of intellectual interest and the advancement of watchmaking.

Patek Philippe's line-up of World Time complications goes all the way back to 1937. The 5330G is a watchmaking first—the first World Time watch with a date (of any kind), designed so it automatically shows the date at the wearer's local time zone. This was launched at the grand exhibition Watch Art Tokyo 2023, for the Japanese market.

Parmigiani Fleurier's most technically impressive watches of the year so far are a thematic trilogy—the Tonda Parmigiani Fleurier Gregorian Calendar (retrograde perpetual calendar with moonphase), Hijri Muslim Calendar (first launched in 2020, but in a PF case for the first time) and Chinese Calendar. The implementation of the lunisolar Hijri and Chinese calendars is something few watch brands have even tried, and the PF Cultural Calendar set, in platinum, is a sort of museum of world cultures in calendar form.

In 2015 Vacheron Constantin introduced the Ref. 57260 pocket watch, which remains the most complicated watch ever made. The Les Cabinotiers Dual Moon Grande Complication is squarely in that tradition, with a high-precision double moonphase display for the northern and southern hemispheres. There are a total of 11 complications including a minute repeater.

The Odysseus Chronograph was the only watch A. Lange & Söhne showed this year at Watches & Wonders, but it was what we have been expecting since the first Odysseus was launched in 2019. What we eventually got was a central minutes and seconds chronograph, adapted to the original Odysseus design, with a unique system for using the crown to switch the case pushers from date setting to chronograph functions.



IT'S COMPLICATED

Clockwise from top left: Patek Philippe World Time Ref. 5330G-010; Vacheron Constantin Les Cabinotiers Dual Moon Grande Complication; Parmigiani Fleurier Tonda PF Hijri Muslim Calendar; Audemars Piguet Code 11.59 Ultra-Complication Universelle RD#4; A. Lange & Söhne Odysseus Chronograph.

The most interesting complicated watch of the year might just be Audemars Piguet's Code 11.59 Universelle—it is the first ever Grande Complication in the often controversial Code 11.59 collection and it's a statement of commitment both to that collection and to AP's long history as a maker of complicated watches.

There is a lot to say about the Universelle but my favourite feature is the highly unusual and sophisticated moonphase display, which uses a complex system of discs and shutters to show you, as much as possible, what you actually see in the night sky—something few if any other moonphase watches can do.

*While the **HYPERWATCH** came and went, watchmaking never lost its fascination with the **PLEASURE OF COMPLEXITY.***

Arts counsel

By ANNABEL DAVIDSON

IT'S NOT LUDICROUS to think of the métiers d'art category of watches as a modern phenomenon. While the extreme miniaturisation of such extraordinarily precise crafts can appear technology-led, one look at a 16th-century pendant watch with an entire landscape engraved on its tiny silver dial in the Patek Philippe Museum dispels that. Métiers d'art have long existed; today's craftspeople are just incorporating contemporary codes and colours—and a few modern tricks.

At Piaget, the Alitura high jewellery watch is a marine-hued jigsaw of marquetry, its dial comprising over two dozen precisely cut daubs of chalcedony, pietersite, opal, sodalite and diamond-set gold to recreate the gleam of sunlight on the surface of deep waters. With a baguette-diamond-set bezel and dark blue alligator strap, it's the horological equivalent of an ocean on the wrist.

Hermès has taken an ultra-minimalist approach to enamel work with its new iteration of the equally refined Slim d'Hermès model, Cheval de Légende. A galloping horse, inspired by the scarf designed by the artist Benoît-Pierre Emery in 2010, is pixellated and picked out with precisely 1,678 minuscule rose-gold or blue enamel beads, each one placed in its own laser-drilled cavity on a polished enamel dial. The result is like pin art made permanent, only beset with diamonds; the 39.5mm case houses the slender H1950 self-winding movement on an alligator strap.

Similarly artistic but far more elaborate is one of Patek Philippe's new Rare Handcrafts editions, unveiled this past June in Tokyo and available to the Japanese market. The Golden Ellipse Snow-Covered Landscape watch utilises grand-feu cloisonné enamel and fine gold wire to recreate a Japanese print in delightful detail, the white-gold case housing the ultra-thin calibre 240 movement.

DIAL TONES

Clockwise from top left: Tiffany & Co Schlumberger Golden Fish; Piaget Metaphoria Alitura; Slim d'Hermès Cheval de Légende; Patek Philippe Golden Ellipse Snow-Covered Landscape; Vacheron Constantin Tribute to Naturalists Explorers Terre de Feu; Bulgari Cameo Imperiale Octo Roma Secret; Cartier Baignoire Allongée.

Today's craftspeople incorporate **CONTEMPORARY CODES** and **MODERN TRICKS.**

Two emerald-spotted, red enamel fish chase the hours in Tiffany & Co's new Schlumberger Golden Fish watch, on a diamond-set dial, bezel and case and a red alligator strap. Meanwhile the ancient art of cameo comes to play in Bulgari's one-of-a-kind Cameo Imperiale Octo Roma Secret Watch. The opening cap shows the profile of Augustus in diamond-set laurel wreath and lapis-lazuli *tunica palmata*; behind it all sits the BVL 268 SK calibre with flying tourbillon.

At Cartier, an abstract puzzle of marquetry in mother of pearl, turquoise, onyx and white gold makes up the dial of the limited-edition Baignoire Allongée. The effect, reminiscent of shattered glass, contrasts with the prickly case of inverse-set tourmalines, spinels and diamonds.

Finally, Vacheron Constantin has distilled the half-decade of exploration undergone by HMS *Beagle* between 1831 and 1836 into four limited-edition timepieces depicting the discoveries made by the naturalists on board, including Charles Darwin. The Tribute to Naturalists Explorers Terre de Feu model sees two meticulously engraved birds and a butterfly flitting over a green enamelled miniature of a jungle. The lower dial shows an ancient map and a compass rose in enamel, as well as an enamelled painting of the *Beagle* itself. Flipped, the Calibre 1120 AT/1 is revealed, while the whole construction is set on a verdant alligator strap. Darwin would approve.



Sporting heroes

By ROBIN SWITHINBANK

STRIPPED BARE, THE promise hiding in any luxury watch is that it will somehow improve you. Here, says the unspoken contract, is a product that will make you more sophisticated, better looking, perhaps even of greater interest to a potential mate. Make that a sports watch, and the pledge seems to go deeper still: wear this, and you will achieve more, and faster, too.

Take IWC's 1970s-themed Ingenieur Automatic 40 as Exhibit A. At launch in the spring, it was shown alongside Dieter Rams's classic modular 620 Chair Programme and Braun FS 80-1 television. The invisible sentiment was in sharp focus: design objects such as these are symbols of high-flying status.

TAG Heuer's Carrera has always said something similar. Created in 1963 for upwardly mobile young bucks and inspired by the fast-track world of elite motorsport, it's become a sports watch category cornerstone. TAG Heuer continues to iterate on it, particularly in this 60th anniversary year, producing a variant called the Chronosprint X Porsche that takes as its mechanical and aesthetic source material the 9.1-second 0-60mph time of the first Porsche 911.

Staying on chronographs, three more of note. Bulgari's super-stylish three-counter Octo Roma Chronograph is a sybaritic pleasure; Hermès's black PVD-coated Ho8 Chronograph adds function to the Parisian house's clever design; and Grand Seiko's Tentagraph sets a new benchmark as the Japanese maker's first fully mechanical chronograph.

The irony in many sports watches is that they're intended to make you look sporty, rather than to be used for sports. Some are, though. Rolex's feathery Yacht-Master 42 RLX Titanium should survive being tossed about on the high



ACTIVE DUTY

Clockwise from top left: Hermès Ho8 Chronograph; Rolex Yacht-Master 42; IWC Ingenieur Automatic 40; Oris AquisPro 4000m; Grand Seiko Tentagraph Hi Beat Automatic Chronograph; Bulgari Octo Roma Chronograph; Louis Vuitton Voyager Skeleton Platinum Limited Edition.

*Wear this, says the **UNSPOKEN CONTRACT**, and you will **ACHIEVE** more. Design objects such as these are symbols of **HIGH-FLYING STATUS**.*

seas, while Tudor's Black Bay 54, a 37mm piece with 200m water resistance, is a reminder that Tudor has been making hardy sports watches since the 1950s. As comfortable in the drink will be Panerai's Luminor Chrono Carbotech Luna Rossa, made of a hyper-durable carbon fibre with links to the America's Cup.

Going back to historic models, Omega's 1948 Seamaster was a true pioneer. That was 75 years ago, prompting a raft of collection models coloured in shades of Summer Blue, including the dishy Seamaster 300. Almost as

retro is Blancpain's Fifty Fathoms, now appearing as the 70th Anniversary Act 2 Tech Gombessa, a watch with a unique three-hour dive time function. Similarly technical is Oris's gargantuan AquisPro 4000m, a deep-dive specialist's watch in 50mm of titanium, with an inventive lockable bezel.

One more anniversary: it's the big three-oh for Audemars Piguet's Royal Oak Offshore, or "the Beast", remembered by a revival of a piece known as the "End of Days", originally released in 1999 to time with the

forgettable Arnold Schwarzenegger film. That watch came in black PVD-coated steel, now upgraded to much more resilient black ceramic.

And finally, a wild card in Louis Vuitton's Voyager Skeleton. Vuitton's watch doesn't bear much definition, not least when it's in platinum and amped up with an open-worked dial, but there's something in its supple form and wearable profile that makes it feel like a sports watch. Even if that's a stretch, there's no doubting it's a totem of sophistication and achievement. ■

HARDY PERENNIALS

Clockwise from left: Blancpain Fifty Fathoms 70th Anniversary Act 2 Tech Gombessa; TAG Heuer Carrera X Porsche Chronosprint; Panerai Luminor Chrono Carbotech Luna Rossa; Omega Seamaster 300 Co-Axial Master Chronometer; Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore Selfwinding Chronograph; Tudor Black Bay 54.



Ultimate GIVING

One-off watches made by the finest makers are now selling for extraordinary prices at charity auctions, but what's in it for the brands, buyers and celebrities?

BY MING LIU

DONATING A BELOVED timepiece for a beloved cause is hardly new—individuals have long requested in their wills that watch collections be auctioned for charity—but in recent years, that spirit of *noblesse oblige* has been amplified. One-of-a-kind watches—the collector's Holy Grail—are naturally going to the highest bidder but, notes Phillips senior consultant Aurel Bacs, “in lieu of enriching oneself and saying, ‘Oh, great, let’s go another £100,000—it’s good for our P&L’, we can now all together do good... It’s a win-win.”

All manner of causes around the globe have benefitted: health and educational charities; environmental and medical initiatives; victims of military conflicts. The most high-profile charity platform is the Only Watch auction, held for the tenth time this year, which has raised just shy of £87 million for research into Duchenne muscular dystrophy. At 62 lots, the upcoming sale in November will be the biggest yet; it will be closely watched for heavy-hitting performance. The momentous 2019 sale, with proceeds of £34.8 million, was notably driven by the first and only, 20-complication Patek Philippe Grandmaster Chime in steel, which hammered down for £28 million.

It was a moment that stunned the watch world. “When a Patek sells for £28 million, the whole industry explodes. The level of awareness of watchmaking changes scale,” says Only Watch founder Luc Pettavino. “Many new people start asking: ‘What’s happening—watches are now sold at the price of Picassos?’ It completely enlarges the scope of watchmaking.”

But it’s not just Only Watch charity timepieces that are turning heads. There have been high-roller lots and record-breaking results from *crème de la crème* brands such as Patek Philippe, Richard Mille and F.P. Journe, which support several Geneva-based children’s charities. Last year, for example, Patek Philippe donated its first titanium Perpetual Calendar Chronograph Ref. 5270 with a green dial, which raised £8.7 million for Children Action, a charity that the watchmaker has

supported since 2005. The gala event, held every three years or so, is regularly attended by Geneva’s great and good, not to mention a smattering of celebrities.

And it’s not all big names and big stakes either. The Horological Society of New York held its annual online charity auction in July in aid of its educational initiatives, with brands including H. Moser & Cie, Jaeger-LeCoultre and Laurent Ferrier all donating timepieces.

Though such philanthropic efforts abound at present, in fact the charity watch has been warming up for its spot in the limelight for some time. In 1999, Antiquorum and the American retailer Tourneau hosted Famous Faces in New York, a cheesy name that said it all: 87 celebrities donated their personal watches to raise funds for charities of their choice; among them Pete Sampras (Movado), Joan Rivers (Universal Genève), Céline Dion (Cartier) and Nancy and Ronald Reagan (the latter’s steel Colibri was acquired by Donald Trump for £5,400). The auction attracted some 750 people, though many of us had probably never heard of Famous Faces until this past June, when a Paul Newman Rolex Daytona (sold for £30,000 at auction in 1999) made its way to Sotheby’s New York’s, selling for a cool £850,000.

In 2001, the Sotheby’s charity auction Wristory sold 25 Swatch watches in aid of God’s Love We Deliver, a hunger organisation for people living with Aids, and a second charity that supported family members of those who had worked in the top-floor restaurant of the Twin Towers. Some 500 guests, including Matthew Modine, Heidi Klum and Isaac Mizrahi, attended the star-studded affair, which raised £310,000—before Swatch Group’s Nicolas Hayek Jr matched the figure.

In the ensuing years, watch brands quietly created their own charity timepieces. In 2005, IWC became global partner of Laureus Sport for Good, an athletics foundation that supports disadvantaged children and teenagers. The initiative grew



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: IWC ambassador and skateboarder Jagger Eaton; IWC Portofino Chronograph 39 Edition "Laureus Sport for Good"; Heidi Klum at 2001 Swatch Wristory Benefit Auction at Sotheby's in NYC; Swatch Watch Despiste designed by Pedro Almodóvar; Only Watch 2015; Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Concept Black Panther; Audemars Piguet x Marvel Event in Dubai 2023; Paul Newman and his Rolex Daytona sold by Sotheby's; Daniel Craig at the Orbis International Flying Eye Hospital, supported by Omega; Action Innocence 2023; F.P. Journe Octa Automatique; Patek Philippe Ref. 6300A-01O Grandmaster Chime for Only Watch 2019.

PASCAL BITZ/ACTION INNOCENCE, CRAIG, OMEGA, EATON, JASON KOERNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR IWC, GAVEL, BILL OXFORD/GETTY IMAGES, KUM, RON GALELLA/GETTY IMAGES, NEWMAN, JONATHAN FERRE/GETTY IMAGES, MARVEL EVENT, CRESTIE VAN ROOYEN/PHOTOGRAPHY/AUDMARS PIGUET, ONLY WATCH, ANM, WATCHES, AUDMARS PIGUET, F.P. JOURNE/ACTION INNOCENCE, IWC, PATEK PHILIPPE, SOTHEBY'S, SWATCH

from a debut Portuguese Chrono-Automatic to annual limited editions across IWC's portfolio (accompanied by glamorous charity dinners). Two years later, F.P. Journe created its first watch for Action Innocence, a Geneva-based children's charity founded in 1999 by Valérie Wertheimer, wife of Gérard Wertheimer, one of the two brothers who own Chanel. The F.P. Journe Chronomètre Souverain featured a strap in the charity's purple livery and raised £144,000. It was the first in a series of purple-themed watches that the watchmaker has donated to the charity over the years; the latest, a unique purple-dial Octa Automatic, went under the hammer for an eye-watering £900,000. The winning bid was surely a highlight of the gala in February that was held in a hangar in Gstaad and was attended by "hundreds of people in black tie and long evening dresses, not necessarily from the watch collector's community", says Bacs. The glamorous society event is known to see underbidders donate millions of francs, well, just because.

Other brands go their own way, to use the corporate tagline of Oris, which created its first charity watch in 2010. The handsome, navy-on-orange Great Barrier Reef diver kick-started more than 20 charity watches to date that benefit ocean and water-conservation projects around the globe. A year later, Daniel Craig was aboard Orbis International's Flying

Eye Hospital aeroplane that travels to remote locations to treat preventable blindness, bound for Mongolia with a special Omega De Ville The Hour Vision Blue watch in tow.

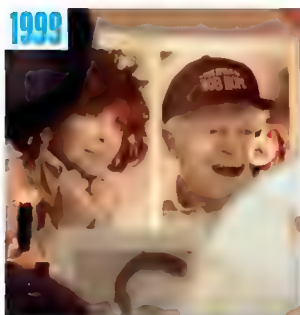
In 2015 Only Watch made a game-changing move from Monaco to Geneva. Bacs recalls insisting on the move, saying that yacht guys were more interested in the boats, while in Geneva, a collector community could easily fill up a room. That November, 450 attendees at a standing-room-only auction raised £10.1 million, more than double the previous sale.

Ultimately, all these charity initiatives have turned the philanthropic watch into an R&D lab, a showcase for creativity. Watches that would normally be killed in production meetings or the boardroom now find an audience in philanthropic gold. Remi Guillemain, head of watches at Christie's Europe (which now stages the Only Watch auction), believes the auctions are useful to map tastes. "With these unique watches, brands can test the market; they can actually see an immediate response from clients if there is demand or not, and decide whether to commercialise a watch in the future," he says. "Should these platforms not exist, it would be more complicated."

No wonder the charity watch has become a landscape of firsts. There are new materials—Patek Philippe's first and only steel £28 million Grandmaster Chime of course, but also its first and

Charity CASES

A brief history of timepieces created and sold for good causes



1999
Famous Faces, hosted by Antiquorum and the American retailer Tourneau in New York, invite 87 celebrities to donate their personal watches for charities of their choice.

2001
The Wristory sale at Sotheby's New York sells 25 Swatch watches in aid of hunger and post-9/11 charities. Swatch Group matches the final £310,000 raised.



2011
Daniel Craig and a special Omega De Ville watch fly to Mongolia aboard Orbis International's Flying Eye Hospital aeroplane, which works to prevent avoidable blindness.

2017
Paul Newman's Rolex Daytona sells at Phillips for £14.8m, a new world record. A portion of proceeds go to The Nell Newman Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation.



2018
Triwa creates a charity watch made from destroyed weapons, with 15 percent donated to conflict-torn societies.

only titanium Triple Complication Ref. 5208 that sold for £5.6 million in Only Watch 2017. There was also the only A. Lange & Söhne 1815 “Homage to Walter Lange” ever made in steel, which sold for £768,000 in aid of Children Action in 2018. It was the highest result ever achieved for a Lange wristwatch at auction.

There have been ground-breaking movements. Most notable was 2021’s Only Watch F.P. Journe x Francis Ford Coppola FFC Blue that sold for £4.1 million. *Revolution* magazine’s founder Wei Koh remarked that its “insane” time-telling automaton hand “uses an all-new digital language”. That same sale also saw a Patek Philippe Complicated Desk Clock Ref. 27001M-001 cross the block for £8.6 million, nearly 20 times its high estimate. The piece was inspired by a 1923 table clock that had been bespoke made for the automobile industrialist James Ward Packard, one of Patek Philippe’s most famous clients.

The charity watch can serve as a teaser for new or revived brands (a Gérald Genta Only Watch, anyone?), or an independent teaming up with horological legends—cue indie-house Furlan Marri’s Secular Perpetual Calendar with Dominique Renaud and Julien Tixier for Only Watch’s auction on 5 November 2023.

It can even semaphore a whole new business strategy. In 2021, Audemars Piguet focused attentions on its Marvel Comics collaboration when its unique Royal Oak Concept “Black

Panther” Flying Tourbillon sold for charity for £4 million; the Le Brassus watchmaker followed this up in May with the Royal Oak Concept Spider-Man, a unique version of the character in a black costume. It went for £6.4 million at a glamorous evening in Dubai, which was presided over by triple-Michelin-starred chef Björn Frantzén, with performances by free climber Alexis Landot and DJ Heron Preston.

And there have been farewells. On the eve of retiring its famous 15202 calibre, Audemars Piguet delivered a retro style 15202 Royal Oak Jumbo in titanium with a bulk metallic glass bezel at 2021’s Only Watch. And who can forget the high-drama sale of the Tiffany-Blue Patek Philippe Nautilus 5711 when 100 percent of the £5 million proceeds, including Phillips’ buyer premium, went to the Nature Conservancy?

A four-time Only Watch participant, François-Paul Journe has made numerous charity watches for a host of causes, from a Parisian spinal cord organisation to supporting victims of Japan’s tsunami and earthquake—all adding to his enviable list of watchmaking accolades and awards. But ultimately, he sees charity watches as the proof of the pudding. “I always try to do something exceptional and rare for Only Watch—it gives me a lot of impetus. There are prizes that are awarded, but the real prize is the price that people pay at Only Watch,” he says. ■

2019

Patek Philippe’s first and only Grandmaster Chime in steel sells for £28m at Only Watch, becoming the most expensive watch in the world.



2020



2020
Watch brands donate unique and prototype watches for The Revolution x The Rake Covid Solidarity Auction, raising money for the World Health Organisation.

2021



2021
At Only Watch, a Patek Philippe desk clock sells for £8.5m, the fourth-highest price ever paid at auction for a timepiece.

2022

The Swiss Institute—a non-profit, free-entry contemporary art museum in New York—inaugurates its biennial TimeForArt charity auction, inviting watch brands to create pieces in support of emerging artists.

2022



2020

Ressence invites the public to design a model of its Type I Slim, the winning piece of which Sotheby’s auctions in aid of Covid-19 research.



2021

2021
The Tiffany-Blue Patek Philippe Nautilus 5711 sells for £5m at Phillips New York, with 100 percent of proceeds benefiting The Nature Conservancy.



2021

2021



2021
The F.P. Journe Francis Ford Coppola FFC Blue sells for £4.1m at Only Watch, setting a new world record for the watchmaker.

2023

Kicking off the launch of the new Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Concept Spider-Man, a unique piece with a black-suited character auctions for £6.4m, raising money for two social enterprise nonprofits.



2023



The 2023

Vanity Fair *On Time*

PORTFOLIO:

THE GOOD LIFE

DESIGNER: TONY WARD
 STYLING: SIAN GABRIEL
 MAKEUP: JACQUELINE WARD
 HAIR: JACQUELINE WARD
 PRODUCTION: JIMMY K. WARD
 PHOTOGRAPHY: JACQUELINE WARD
 ART DIRECTION: JACQUELINE WARD
 PROP STYLING: JACQUELINE WARD
 SET DESIGN: JACQUELINE WARD
 COSTUME DESIGNER: JACQUELINE WARD
 HAIR DESIGNER: JACQUELINE WARD
 MAKEUP DESIGNER: JACQUELINE WARD
 PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JACQUELINE WARD
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JACQUELINE WARD
 PRODUCED BY: JACQUELINE WARD
 WRITTEN BY: JACQUELINE WARD
 DIRECTED BY: JACQUELINE WARD

Whether it's at Naomi Campbell's 52nd birthday in Cannes or Mick Jagger's 80th in London, Emma Thynn, Marchioness of Bath, parties with the best, but her favourite parties are those at home.

DESIGNED BY TONY WARD COUTURE JEWELRY BY CHOPIN RED WAREFIRE
COLLECTION STYLED BY SIAN SABARI HAIR BY JACK MEECE HAIR TRIMMING
BY JIMMY SIA AGENCY MAKE UP BY HOWARD PONG C & PHOTOGRAPHER S
ASSISTANT AND DIG. OPERATOR JEM INGRAM PRODUCTION BY OLYMPIA ROSS

AUTUMN 2023





Alessandro RISTORI

Photography by ALBERTO ZANETTI

Alessandro Ristori has the born entertainer's gift of irresistibility: the first time you see him come on stage you wonder WTF, but by the time he has reached the end of his first song you will be standing on tables or banquettes, jumping up and down cheering and whooping for joy... at least, that was my experience when I first saw him perform five years ago. If you frequent the Italian and French Rivas or are a regular in Forte dei Marmi or Porto Cervo you will be familiar with his unique brand of high-kicking, flared-trousered flamboyance. Backed by his band the Portofinos, shirt open to the navel, he swivels, sways, swings and sweats his way through the great Italian songbook, with frequent detours into Vegas-era Elvis. For 200 days a year this Gucci-clad Pied Piper of the jetset tours the resorts where the rich and the beautiful go to be happy. It is a journey that has taken him from the Pyramids to princely palaces, from Annabel's to the Alps. There have also been forays into the watch industry: he performed at the Design Museum in London for the opening gala of the exhibition of watches from the Oak Collection, and in Sicily for the launch of Jacob & Co's Godfather watch. He is dressed from coiffed head to Cuban heel in Gucci, and I suppose you could say that Gucci is his official timing partner too: Ristori is a perfectionist, and it is vital that the colour of timepieces matches the outfits. But make no mistake, precise timekeeping is just as important for Ristori as it is, say, for a Formula 1 racing driver. "The perfect performance is 80 minutes long—the audience has had a good time but leaves wanting more," he explains. "It is all about timing; about the right time to play an upbeat number and the right time for something slower, always at the right tempo." One thing is for certain: Ristori time is always a good time. *NF* ■

Photographed with the Portofinos at Twiga, Forte dei Marmi, Italy, July 7, 2023, wearing **GUCCI 25H** watches.

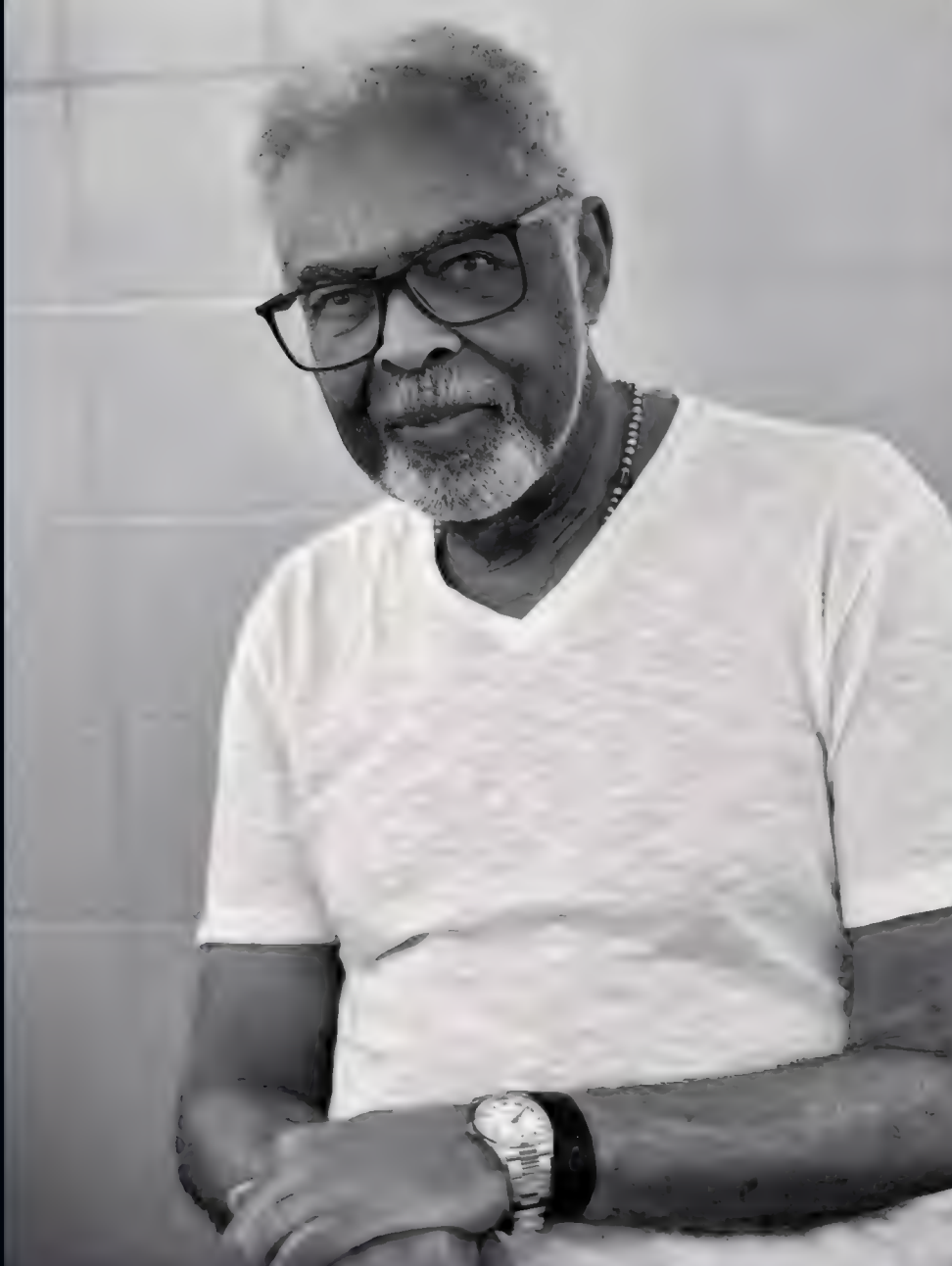
Orlando HAMILTON

Photography by SYLVAIN HOMO

Having been a floral designer for more than 20 years and made arrangements for the royal family as well as rock royalty (Elton John, Madonna and Robbie Williams, *inter alia*), Orlando Hamilton has been integral to countless celebrations and good times. While he enjoys the instant gratification of seeing flowers in full bloom when he makes grand arrangements for clients such as Laurent-Perrier and Aston Martin, Hamilton also sees a deeper meaning within them. "I saw a quote a while ago that said, 'A society becomes great when old men plant trees in whose shade they may never sit'—my work as a floral designer has been born out of my love of nature and the natural world," he says. "I am inspired by it and how it can teach us so much personally and collectively. Flowers are very powerful symbols of hope, growth, awakening and consciousness." Although Hamilton saves the TAG Heuer gifted to him by his brother for special occasions, he does see the patterns of time reflected in the life cycle of the plants with which he works. "Flowers bloom and wane, and often bloom again," he says. "Enjoy the blooms, savour those good moments, and roll with the tricky ones. I try not to overthink the next chapter." *HR* ■

Photographed at Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, London, July 8, 2023, wearing an SKMEI 1283 5ATM Sport.





Gilberto GIL

Photography by **THANASSIS KRIKIS**

This year Athens was treated to a cultural bonanza when for a week in early summer Rolex designated it the *de facto* world capital of culture, flooding the Greek capital's museums and cultural spaces with performances, talks, exhibitions and panel discussions involving leading figures from across the arts. Rolex was celebrating 20 years of its Mentor and Protégé programme and given the story of Mentor and Telemachus is to be found in Homer's *Odyssey*, Greece seemed an appropriate choice. The list of participants was long and illustrious and the venues, including the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, were spectacular. The week culminated with an open-air public concert in the Megaron Gardens, at which Gilberto Gil performed with his mentee Dina Elwididi. Octogenarian Gil is more than a giant of bossa nova, he is a cultural colossus, having served as Brazil's culture minister as well as one of its greatest cultural exports. It is hard to put into words the effect his presence had on the crowd that warm Athenian night, but so special and so life-enhancing was his performance that when he returned to Athens in July to give a concert, *Vanity Fair On Time* was backstage to photograph the great man as he prepared, counting down the moments till he went on stage on his Datejust. **NF ■**

Photographed at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Athens, July 17, 2023, wearing a **Rolex Datejust 36 Oystersteel**.

Carole **BAMFORD**

Photography by PHILIP SINDEN

It has made organic food chic and become a synecdoche for an entire way of life... This year Daylesford Organic farmshop in the Cotswolds celebrates its 20th anniversary, but founder Carole Bamford traces its origins much further back—to 1977, when her daughter Alice was born, and she started taking an interest in the way food was produced. At the time, the popular idea of organic was somewhere between hippy whole foods and BBC sitcom *The Good Life*.

“On the farm where we lived in Staffordshire, they were still using chemical fertiliser and pesticides. I went to the Royal Agricultural Show and walked into the organic tent, where they told me how chemicals affect what we eat and what we grow.”

It was a Damascene moment. She persuaded the farm manager to go organic, and did the same when family moved to Daylesford, where the house came with a herd of Friesian cows. “It took me three years to turn the land organic, then I thought we must have an end product for the milk so we made organic cheese and won a gold medal.” After the organic creamery, she opened a small farm shop in an old barn. “At that time most farm shops were a bit scruffy and sawdusty, and I think I did it with a little bit of style,” she says.

And just as she changed the concept of the farm shop, her son, George, changed the concept of the customised watch. At about the time she opened Daylesford, George was embarking on the journey that would lead to the founding of Bamford Watch Department: purveyor of its own watches and of official customised timepieces made with brands, including Zenith, TAG Heuer, Bulgari, and in the case of the Laureato Ghost on Bamford’s wrist, Girard-Perregaux. **NF** ■

Photographed with her Gloucester cattle at Daylesford Farm, Gloucestershire, July 7, 2023, wearing a Bamford Watch Department x Girard-Perregaux Ghost.







Greg WILLIAMS

Photography by GREG WILLIAMS

Greg Williams knew that he wanted to be a photographer at the age of six, when a relative visiting from Canada arrived with a panoply of photographic equipment: “all the stuff you used to see tourists with, cameras with long lenses and flashes dangling around his neck, the lot. When he left, he sent me an Instamatic camera.”

At that moment he knew the course his life would take, which is just as well as he was severely dyslexic. “It was either photography or the army,” he says, only half joking. His first professional incarnation saw him reporting from war zones. He experienced Myanmar and Chechnya, “but in Sierra Leone, things got quite frightening, and when I returned I thought I needed a change.”

The good, or at least the shiny, life of Hollywood beckoned. One of his early assignments on the movie beat was photographing Pierce Brosnan when he was playing 007. It was his introduction to watches: Omega liked it so much they used it in advertising. Today he is a film-world fixture, with *Vogue* recently calling him the A-list’s favourite photographer. Over the past two decades, he has worked with many of the world’s best-known actors and watch brands and built up a collection of timepieces to which he will soon be adding a special-order Cartier. While that’s being made, he was lent their vintage perpetual calendar minute repeater Pasha de Cartier, and he was absorbed by the intricacies of the chiming mechanism and the fact it could keep time and date even over a leap year — “Watches are a lot like cameras in that respect, the mechanisms of both are utterly engrossing,” he says. This fascination came in useful when he was asked to design a special-edition Leica Q2 with Daniel Craig. Perhaps it’s time for a Greg Williams-designed watch. **NF** ■

Photographed at The Ritz, London, July 20, 2023, wearing a vintage 1991 **Cartier Pasha de Cartier Minute Repeater**.

Andreas CAMINADA

Photography by ALEX TEUSCHER

Andreas Caminada is a gastronomic Prospero in charge of his own enchanted realm among the mountains, pastures and rivers of eastern Switzerland. In his castle restaurant he conjures up culinary magic so bewitching that by the age of 33 it had earned its third Michelin Star. While others seek success in the kitchens of the big cities, Caminada was adamant that his destiny lay in nature. "I wanted to open up my restaurant somewhere in the region where I grew up, because I just love to be surrounded by the mountains." He started with a dream and four employees in 2003; 20 years on, he has made Fürstenau famous with foodies: "It's officially the smallest city in the world." The dream has since outgrown the original location of Schauenstein Castle and now embraces the hotel Casa Caminada, a shop, a bakery, a cheese cellar and a vegetarian restaurant. "I really enjoy my work," he says, "but I am always running a little bit behind, so it is good to have a Hublot on the wrist, to see the time clearly, because cooking has to do a lot with timing. For the rest, having a good time is spending time with friends, sitting down with the family in a great restaurant somewhere on the planet. That's the joy of life." **NF** ■

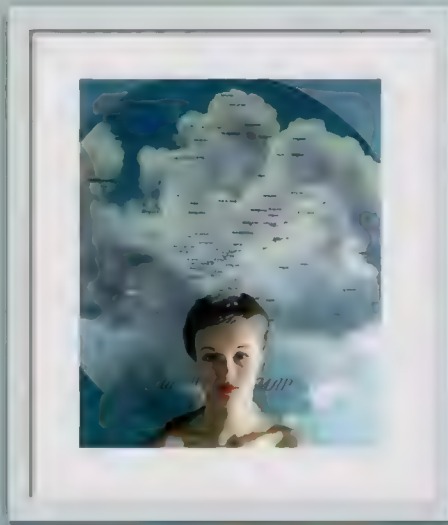
Photographed in the kitchen at Schloss Schauenstein, Fürstenau, Switzerland, August 9, 2023, wearing a Hublot Big Bang Unico Sapphire 42mm.



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WATCH REPORT

By NICHOLAS FOULKES *Illustration by* MAX-O-MATIC





PARTY LINES

From left: **Daniel Roth** Tourbillon Souscription. **A Lange & Söhne** 1815 Rattrapante Perpetual Calendar. **Hervé Schlichter** L'Essentiel Tree of Life Philosophical Regulator. **JC Biver** Minute Repeater Carillon Tourbillon Biver Skeleton. **Patek Philippe** Aquanaut Luce Annual Calendar Ref. 5261R-001. **Vacheron Constantin** Patrimoine Retrograde Day-Date Platinum.



SECRET GARDEN

From left: **Hermès** Arceau Belles du Mexique. **Harry Winston** Ocean Date Moon Phase Automatic. **Jaeger-LeCoultre** Rendez-Vous Dazzling Night & Day. **Cartier** Beautés du Monde. **Dior** Grand Bal Milly la Nuit. **Piaget** Limelight Aura. **Chanel** Mademoiselle Privé Lion Cuff. **Chopard** Red Carpet Collection. **Van Cleef & Arpels** Lady Féerie Or Rose. **Bulgari** Monete Catene Dual Time Secret.



SAIGON: K. ANDRÉAS, DRESS: BEN BLINN, MAKEUP: DAIG, STYLING: EUROPEAN, JOURNAL: L'ESPRESSO, L'ESPRESSO



CREST OF A WAVE

From left: **Panerai** Luminor Quaranta Steel DLC Luna Rossa. **Breitling** Navitimer 36mm. **Omega** Seamaster PloProf 1200M Co-Axial Master Chronometer. **Ulysse Nardin** Diver Net Azure. **Grand Seiko** Unkai Sea of Clouds Hi-Beat GMT. **Tudor** Pelagos FXD Alinghi Red Bull. **Rolex** Oyster Perpetual Explorer 40.



SERENITY NOW

From left: **Girard-Perregaux** Laureato Absolute. **TAG Heuer** Carrera Skipper. **Zenith** Defy 21 Chroma II. **IWC** Pilot's Watch Chronograph 41 Top Gun Oceana. **Richard Mille** RM 72-01 Le Mans Classic. **Hublot** Classic Fusion Chronograph Premier League. **Audemars Piguet** Royal Oak Offshore Selfwinding Chronograph.









CLASSIC TASTES

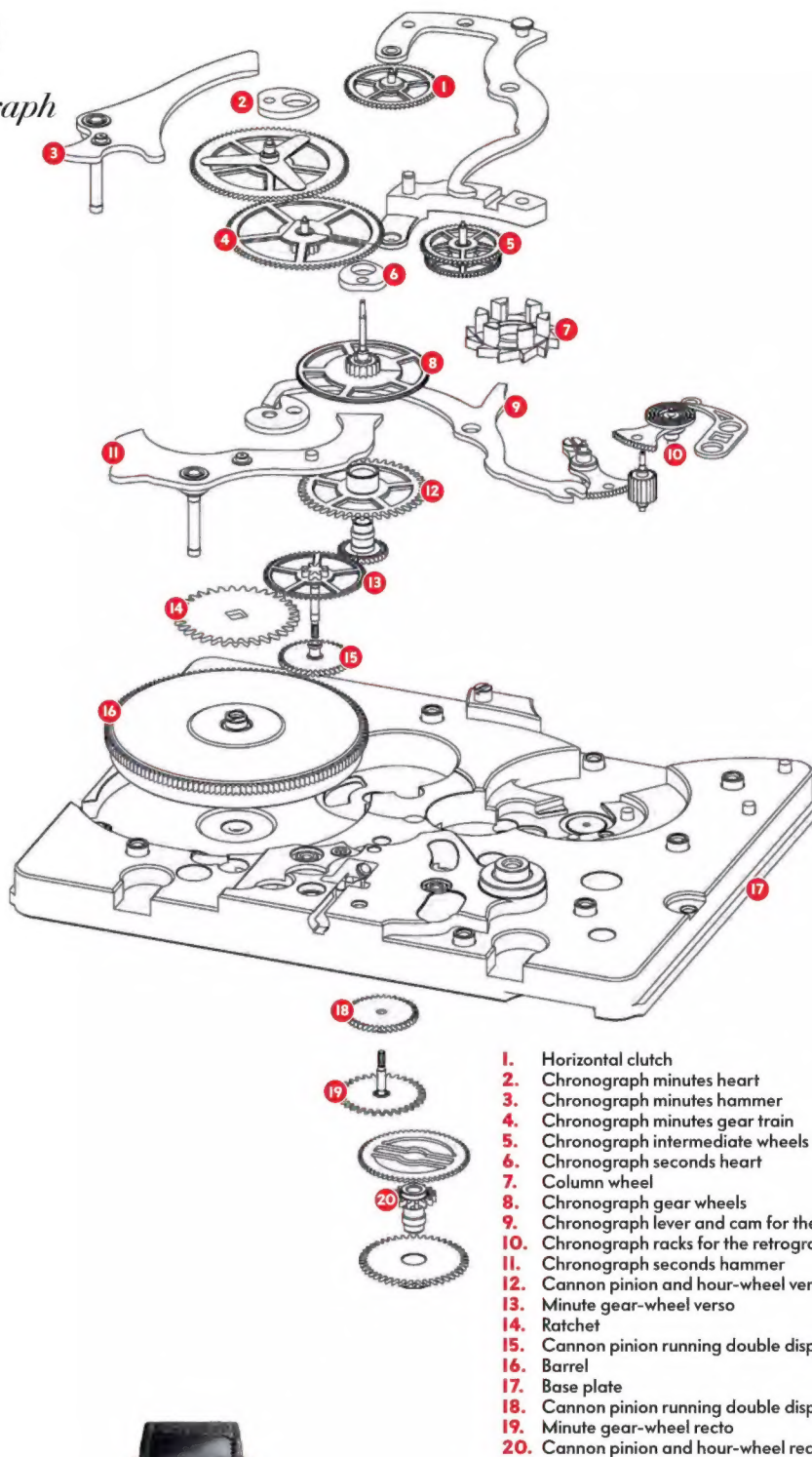
From left: **Raymond Weil** Freelancer Automatic. **Montblanc** Star Legacy Automatic Date. **Oris** Hölstein Edition 2023. **Gerald Charles** Maestro 2.0 Ultra Thin. **Louis Vuitton** Tambour Steel. **Bremont** MB Viper. **Bell & Ross** BR 05 GMT Sky Blue.

JAEGER-LECOULTRE

Reverso Tribute Chronograph

One of my favourite watches of the year is the JLC Reverso Tribute Chronograph, not least because I remember the first time the Reverso chrono appeared back in 1996; at the time the manufacture had undertaken the ambitious project to put what were then regarded as the major horological complications into the Reverso case. The result was a series of six watches that became a landmark in the history of the manufacture. Inspired by this original, the Reverso Tribute Chronograph is conceptually satisfying inasmuch as it unites in one watch two things for which JLC is famous: the Reverso case and the design and manufacture of complicated movements, the latter a tradition well expressed in new calibre 860, which features a column wheel chrono with a horizontal, rather than vertical, clutch to reduce the height of the movement. And in a subtle improvement on the 1996 version, the time of day is now displayed on both the back and front dials.

NICHOLAS FOULKES



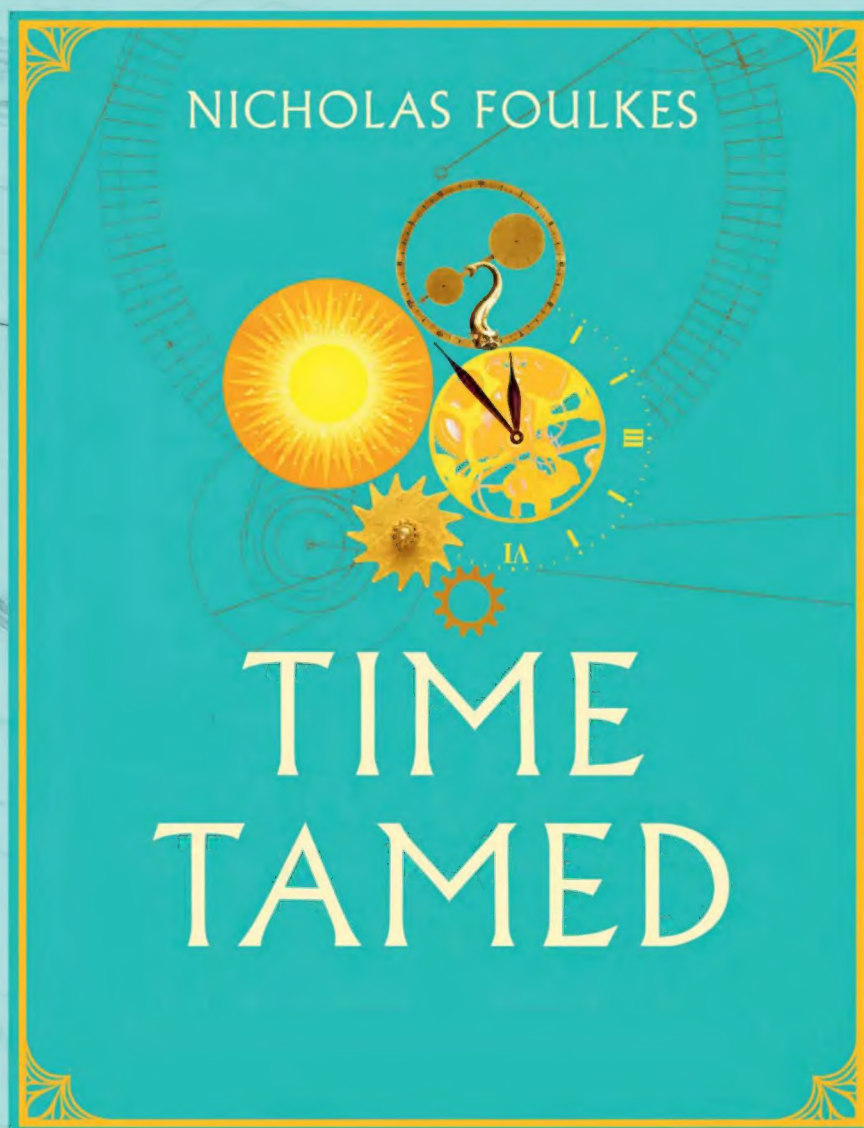
Inside Story

Water resistance: 30m
 Case dimensions: 49.4 x 29.9mm
 Movement thickness: 5.44mm



Number of jewels: 38
 Power reserve: 52 hours
 Movement frequency: 28,800 (4Hz)
 Movement components: 292

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